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Understanding the Leadership Capacity and Practice of Assistant Principals

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore the leadership capacities and practices of assistant principals. The research also sought to determine what relationships existed between capacity and practice and to see if there was a difference based on experience, context and personal characteristics.

Since the majority of principals first serve as assistant principals, their work and experiences as assistant principals will have significant consequences (Kwan, 2009). The literature has long held and continues to challenge the notion that the role of assistant principal is adequate preparation for the principalship (Chan, Webb, & Bowen, 2003; Harris, Muijs, & Crawford, 2003; Kwan, 2009; Mertz, 2000; Webb & Vulliamy, 1995).

Based on empirical findings, this study has affirmed the need to further research and refine the role of the assistant principal. The results indicate that in addition to strengths, there are explicit gaps and missed opportunities in the leadership practices of assistant principals that impact the potential for building a leadership pipeline within schools. The work of the assistant principal is characterized by a proliferation of duties rather than a strategic set of practices that support distributed leadership and sustainability.

Keywords: school leadership, capacity, practice, assistant principal, succession management

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Chapter One: Introduction

Research has confirmed the importance of effective school leadership. The leader can account for as much as 25% of variance in the achievement of students at a particular school (Berends, Kirby, Naftel, & McKelvey, 2001; Clifford, Behrstock-Sherratt, & Fetters, 2012; Leithwood & Riehl, 2005). With an increased focus on the school's role in preparing students to be college and career ready by developing 21st century skills, research has recently focused on the role of the principal. There has also been a spotlight on schools' ability to educate all students equitably, thus placing greater accountability with the role of being a school principal. The view of the principal is no longer that of an educational manager, but of a transformational leader that will effect change in the current educational system (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2003).

Along with the increasing demands of being an effective principal of 21st century learning, there is an increasing shortage of qualified applicants to fulfill the upcoming vacancies. The principal shortage has been well documented for more than a decade and, rather than shrinking, the principal shortage is actually growing (Bloom & Krovetz, 2001; Burdette & Schertzer, 2005; Fenwick & Pierce, 2001; Johnson-Taylor & Martin, 2007).

The concern is that there is an "alarming shortage of qualified administrators available to fill current and foreseeable school principal openings" (Pounder & Crow, 2005, p. 56). The United States Department of Labor has projected that principal

vacancies will increase by 10% in the next 10 years (Bureau of Labor and Statistics, 2009). The shortage has been even more significant in schools where there are greater numbers of minority and low socioeconomic status students (Roza, Celio, Harvey, & Wishon, 2003). Time commitment and compensation are also mediating factors that affect the desire of educators to pursue the principalship. Principals commonly increase their workday to 10 to 12 hours per day and add an additional 20 to 40 days per year (Cusick, 2003). Many would-be administrators with families look at the increased time and decide not to apply to the position (Cusick, 2003). Compensation for principals often works out to being only one or two dollars more per hour (Gilman & Lanman-Givens, 2001). Although compensation might be associated with the quality of the applicants, other measures also influence an educator's desire to apply for the principalship. The increased pressure to ensure that every student is achieving success is commonly cited as an additional reason for declining to enter the field of school leadership (Pounder & Merrill, 2001a; Shields, 2004).

Statement of the Problem

Before taking on the role of principal, the majority of principals serve as assistant principals (Kwan & Walker, 2011; Pounder & Crow, 2005). While the leadership of the assistant principal is becoming increasingly central to the success of a school, little is known about the role (Hausman, Nebeker, McCreary, & Donaldson, 2002). Currently, the role of assistant principal is more defined by the building principal rather than an established set of standards (Weller & Weller, 2002). Additionally, there is a dearth of literature addressing the appropriate role of the assistant principal in preparation to

assume the principalship. The literature does document that the current nature of the job of the assistant principal is often very narrowly focused on student discipline, scheduling, and clerical tasks (Johnson-Taylor & Martin, 2007). The leadership demands of schools are increasingly complex and assistant principals have the opportunity to support distributed leadership. The increased accountability to ensure learning and achievement of all students has increased the scope of the job of school principal to becoming the "super-principal" (Pierce, 2000). The move from "heroic" leadership to post-heroic leadership has prompted many principals to enact aspects of distributed leadership (Pounder & Crow, 2005). The idea of distributed leadership within schools has been promoted as best practice, but there is still a need for more research into the actual practice within schools (Storey, 2004). Although the distribution of leadership inherently includes the assistant principal, the distributed components are often isolated and leave the assistant principal ill-prepared to assume the role of principal (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). The core issue to be addressed in this study is the current leadership capacity and practice of assistant principals.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the leadership capacity and practice of assistant principals and to identify strengths and gaps in practice. The purpose was also to determine what relationships existed between perceived capacity and practice and to see if there was a difference based on experience, setting, and personal characteristics. Information gained from this research will add to the body of knowledge about the role of the assistant principal in schools and has the potential to inform practice around

assessment of assistant principals' leadership competencies. The focus on the assistant principal addresses the lack of research in a critical area of leadership capacity in schools. It also addresses succession management in school systems by investigating the current state of the presence of the leadership function for the assistant principal.

Research Questions

The purpose of the study was to explore the current leadership capacity and practice of assistant principals. The research also sought to document the variance in the capacity and practice of assistant principals. In order to achieve the objectives, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent are assistant principals engaging in the school leadership domains of facilitating organizational school culture, instructional leadership, school improvement, management, and family and community relations?

2. To what extent do assistant principals report self-efficacy in facilitating the school leadership domains of organizational school culture, instructional leadership, school improvement, management, and family and community relations?

3. How do assistant principals' self-reports of efficacy correlate to the extent of practice of school leadership?

4. What differences exist among assistant principal capacity and practice based on experience, setting and personal characteristics?

Study Significance

Leading a school that is effective in preparing students with the knowledge and skills to compete in a global society is one of the major challenges of public education. The charge of educating students for careers that currently do not exist is a challenge to leaders of schools that are vastly different from schools of 50 years ago (Goldring & Schuermann, 2009). Research indicates that student achievement improves most effectively through comprehensive reform (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). Furthermore, the role of the school leader is crucial to successful implementation of reform (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003).

Historically, school leadership has been defined by the actions of the principal in leading the educational program of the school (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008). As the push for collaborative leadership expanded, teacher leadership began to increase in many school sites (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Scholarship on both principal leadership and teacher leadership continues to grow as the focus of research on effective schools (Eyal & Roth, 2011; Ibrahim, & Al-Taneiji, 2013: Jackson, Burrus, Bassett, & Roberts, 2010; Larsen, & Rieckhoff, 2013; Lieberman & Miller, 2004; Sheppard, Hurley, & Dibbon, 2010; Walker, Hu, & Qian, 2012). Curiously, there continues to be a deficiency of literature on the role of the assistant principal in improving schools (Glanz, 2004). This study examined the work of the assistant principal through the lens of the capacities expected of effective school leadership.

Definition of Terms

There are several key terms used throughout this research project, the basic knowledge of which are critical to the reader's understanding. Each term is defined below.

Assistant Principal - The term assistant principal is commonly used in the United States to connote an entry level, school administrative position (Glanz, 1994). Depending on region or country of origin, there are several other terms that may be used in reference to a person fulfilling the same role in the school including vice principal, administrative assistant, deputy head, deputy principal, associate principal and assistant to the principal (Cranston, Tromans, & Reugebrink, 2004; Kwan & Walker, 2008). For the purpose of this research, an assistant principal is a school-based administrator who reports to the principal, whose job responsibilities are to aid the principal in the planning, implementation, monitoring and assessment of the strategic direction of the school. This definition recognizes that schools may have several school based educators who do not have teaching responsibilities who serve as instructional supports for teachers or discipline supports for students and families.

Aspiring Principal – An assistant principal as defined above who aspires to become a school principal.

Principal – A school-based administrator that has executive authority for a school. The term *current principal* means an individual who is currently or formally employed as a principal.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Although the role of the assistant principal is becoming increasingly central to the success of a school, there is little known about the role (Hausman et al., 2002). Additionally, there is a dearth of literature on the appropriate role of the assistant principal in preparation to assume the principalship. The job of the assistant principal has often been very narrowly focused on student discipline, scheduling and clerical tasks (Johnson-Taylor & Martin, 2007). Sources document that rather than being determined by a needs-based assessment, the principal most often assigns duties to the assistant principal based on the duties that he or she was assigned as an assistant principal (Harvey, 1994; Kelly, 1987; Kwan & Walker, 2008; Mertz, 2000; Weller & Weller, 2002).

Current reform in education has resulted in increased responsibility and accountability for all educators (Lee, Kwan, & Walker, 2009; Levine, 2005). The new demands of preparing students to compete in a globalized society require leaders who can transform schools (Oleszewski, Shoho, & Barnett, 2012). The past 20 years of research into transformational leadership has demonstrated the influence of the school leader on student achievement. Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowes' (2008) meta-analysis indicated that focusing on teaching and learning elicited a stronger influence on student performance. With teachers having the largest impact on student achievement (Wong, 2007; Louis, et

al., 2010), leadership has placed a great deal of emphasis on human capital management to align teacher and leader recruitment, hiring, professional development and evaluation with student learning (Donaldson, 2013; Leithwood et al., 2004).

The development of new state standards along with assessment and accountability systems has contributed to the focus on quality school leaders (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). Given leaders' effect on student performance, considerable focus has been directed to those at the top of the educational hierarchy, including principals and superintendents (Pounder, Ogawa, & Adams, 1995). When research shifted to focus on other leadership roles in education, the attention went to the leadership contributions of teachers, thus making the concept of teacher leadership a key feature of education reform (Pounder et al., 1995; Smylie, Conley, & Marks, 2002). A significant area of educational leadership that remains underrepresented in the literature is the nature of assistant principal leadership (Smylie, Bennet, Konkol, & Fendt, 2005). The role of the assistant principal is "one of the 'least researched' and 'least discussed' roles in educational leadership" (Weller & Weller, 2002, p. xiii). Within the historical context of educational leadership, it is only recently that there has been an attempt to characterize the role and question the activities of the assistant principal (Kwan & Walker, 2011; Read, 2011).

Evolution of the Assistant Principal

Understanding the current realities of the assistant principal starts with a thorough understanding of the historical context of the role. The position of assistant principal was created in response to expanding bureaucracy as a result of unprecedented growth in student enrollment (Glanz, 1994). One of the first references to the role of the assistant

principal began with the appointment of the special assistant to be in charge of records, thus providing more supervision time for the principal (National Education Association of the United States Department of Elementary School Principals, 1970). As urban schools grew after 1900, the "Head Teacher Assistant" began to arise as an official position (Mertz & McNeely, 1999). Without a concerted effort to define the role, quite often the head teacher assistant had a full teaching load in addition to the extra clerical work. The situation left little time for the first iteration of assistant principal to be involved in supervision or administration (Austin & Brown, 1970; National Education Association of the United States Department of Elementary School Principals, 1970).

Between 1895 and 1920, public school enrollment increased from 14.5 to 21 million students (Glanz, 1994). In 1920, the National Association of Elementary School Principals was established, with a focus on the application of research methods to the problems of the principalship, but no further attention to the role of assistant principal. The belief of the time was that the principal could delegate routine work to assistant principals in order to become more effective supervisors. Another factor that lead to the emergence of the role of the assistant principal included an increased number of teachers as well as more services being offered at the school (Goldman, 1966). In 1923, the Committee on Educational Progress reported that 37 of 83 large school districts reported having the role of assistant principal, with the most common associated duties including classroom teaching, administration and supervision (National Education Association of the United States Department of Elementary School Principals, 1970). After World War II, the title of assistant principal began to be used to delineate the position (Grogan &

Andrews, 2002). The common practice was to choose the assistant principal from the ranks of teachers, but designated him/her with little formal authority (Glanz, 2004).

The assistant principal role continues to suffer from a deficiency of clearly agreed upon characteristics in literature and practice in terms that will make the most of this position and the people serving in the role. It is rare that an assistant principal has measurable outcomes (Marshall & Hooley, 2006). Additionally, the variance of roles and responsibilities placed on assistant principals are predominantly unknown to those the assistant contacts on a daily basis (Hartzell, 1995). This disparity results in a culture in which the assistant principal is often ignored and slandered in the course of their work (Marshall & Hooley, 2006).

Current Role of the Assistant Principal

The contemporary role of assistant principal still suffers from the same lack of focus associated with its inception. There is no universally accepted definition of the role or responsibilities of the assistant principal (Marshall & Hooley, 2006; Weller & Weller, 2002). The contractual phrase "performing duties assigned by superior" means that the scope of the job is defined primarily by the principal (Harvey, 1994; Kelly, 1987; Mertz, 2000; Weller & Weller, 2002).

There also is a lack of refinement related to how the role should be used to prepare the assistant principal to be qualified and ready to assume the role of becoming a principal (Levine, 2005). This lack of definition of the role leads to ineffective use of the position (Reed, 1984). The expectations and experiences of the assistant principal

position must be expanded in order to prepare the assistant to assume the role of the principal (Lovely, 2004).

Preparation and Training for Assistant Principals

Assistant principals typically go through university-based administrator training programs in order to prepare for assuming the principalship (Levine, 2005). Continued dissatisfaction with the readiness of program participants to assume the principalship has given rise to the evolution of many alternative route programs across the country, which introduces further variance in training for school administrators, as different programs employ an array of theoretical frameworks to drive curriculum and practice. Additionally, there is a lack of universal standards of program entry and exit, content, pedagogy and structure (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). The structures around preparation programs also exhibit a wide variance for financial support levels. Within the seven principal preparation programs included in the Stanford School Leadership Study (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007), the cost ranged from $18,900 to $41,000 per student. The coordinated support from the programs also ranged from $4,800 to $72,500. What is common to school administration training programs is the focus on the principalship and lack of focus on other administrative pathways (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007).

This narrow focus on preparing educators for the principalship tends to mirror the business practice of succession planning rather than succession management. Succession planning ensures that there is a pool of people within the organization to step into key roles when they become vacant. Succession planning also relies on the cultivation of high potentials but it can also have negative side effects on those who are not considered a part

of the "high potential group" (Peterson, 2002; Rothwell, 2010). Conversely, succession management focuses on the development of the leadership function at all levels of the organization. Succession management also seeks to develop a broad pool of leaders who are able to assume varied leadership roles in the organization. The membership of the candidate pool is fluid, based on the assessed competencies of the group and the needs of the available position (Rothwell, 2010).

As a result of the high profile attention paid to the imploding pool of qualified principal candidates, school districts and university preparation programs have begun to reorganize their coursework and experiences based on desired outcomes. There is a growing movement toward developing systems that support leaders through the career continuum, which builds on Peterson's "career-staged" professional development (Peterson, 2002). Creating coherent linkages between preparation programs and in-service programs enhances the leader's access to coordinated learning (Peterson, 2002). Many district in-service learning programs offer a range of support for principals ranging from little support to unconnected programs to multi-pronged integrated professional development (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). The efficacy of professional development is still contested in the literature. Camburn, Rowan and Taylor (2003) purport that professional development effectively encourages assistant principals to engage in instructional leadership tasks. On the contrary, Hausman, Nebeker, McCreary and Donaldson (2002) found that greater success as an assistant principal was not related to higher levels of professional development. Even with the controversy over the efficacy of

professional development, assistant principals' professional development opportunities are not equal to those of teachers or principals (Jayne, 1996).

Role Ambiguity and Role Conflict

Further emphasizing the gap in which assistant principals find themselves are the concepts of role ambiguity and role conflict. When a person joins an organization, he or she forms expectations about the position. During the transition into the organization, the employee compares what was expected before assuming the role to what is perceived to be expected of the employee by the employer. The difference between expectation and perception is what constitutes role ambiguity (Hartenian, Hadaway, & Badovick, 2011). Role ambiguity occurs when a person is, "unclear regarding the goals, expectations, or responsibilities associated with the performance of their position" (English, 2006). A study in the field of organizational role dynamics found a negative relationship between role ambiguity and job performance (Tubre & Collins, 2000). Extensive research conducted on the relationship of role ambiguity, role conflict and correlates suggest an impact on job satisfaction, absenteeism and job performance (Tubre & Collins, 2000). The research into the assistant principal position and from theory of role dynamics corroborates this assertion. The relentless pace of unpredictable and immediately demanding tasks hinders administrators from doing the work that can be described as something other than reactionary (Hartzell, 1995).

The growing and changing function of the assistant principal continues to generate role ambiguity and role conflict for those educators serving in the role. As a middle manager in education, the assistant principal must balance relationships with

people at several levels including district leadership, the principal, teachers and other school personnel. It is the nature of the job that 'screams' ambiguity (Hartzell, 1995). Assistant principals are often caught between varying factions who want opposing outcomes. An assistant principal handling a discipline issue may find that the teacher would like heavy consequences for a student action while balancing the district desire to reduce office referrals and thus suspensions. Marshall and Hooley (2006) describe the situation of the assistant principal that does not have the authority to hire substitute teachers, but must still deal with the issues that arise when substitutes are not carefully selected. The assistant principal is often left trying to make the right decision, but the right decision for which stakeholder? (Greenfield, 2004). The intricacies of the possibilities of decisions increase the amount of time and the level of anxiety associated with each decision (Rintoul, 2011).

Without a clear definition of job expectations, the individual most likely will rely on the trial and error approach to meet the organizational expectations (Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970). Furthermore, without reflective practice on the efficacy of his or her decisions, there is an increased likelihood that the assistant principal could make systematic errors based on the inferences from the decisions. Persistence in the use of certain procedures could lead to competency traps on the part of the assistant principal (Levitt & March, 1988). The overwhelming nature of the assistant principalship encourages fast learning, which in turn increases the risk of maladaptive specialization (Herriott, Levinthal, & March, 1985). Maladaptive specialization occurs when a person or organization gains a favorable outcome with an inferior procedure and thus progresses

towards specialization in the inferior procedure (Levitt & March, 1988). Maladaptive specialization impedes the endeavor to seek or adopt superior procedures (Levitt & March, 1988). If an assistant principal finds success in punishing a student to get the student to conform to accepted behavioral norms, then the assistant principal is more likely to continue this practice over implementing a positive multi-tiered system of support.

Role conflict occurs when people attempt to balance the incompatible role expectations of their position. One example of role conflict occurs "when the immediate demands of the school interfere with doing the work they value as an expression of their professionalism" (Marshall & Hooley, 2006, p. 8). Lee, Kwan and Walker (2009) found that assistant principals experience a discrepancy between what they feel is important and what they actually do on a daily basis. There is also a clearly documented difference between the activities that typically consume the time of the assistant principal and what the literature suggest as best practices to lead towards school reform. Assistant principals generally spend the majority of their time with administrative tasks, custodial duties and discipline, leaving little time for instructional leadership (Glanz, 2004). Assistant principals also experience role conflict in balancing the demands of the job and the demands of their personal lives. Traditional principals often report 70-hour weeks with a minimum of a twelve-hour day. One principal commented that

> There is a large amount of stress associated with the position of principal. The stress can sap you of the emotional energies needed to raise a family. I see so many needy kids due to lack of parental involvement; I don't want my kids to be in that same category. (Eckman & Kelber, 2010, p. 211)

Assistant principals find the lack of balance in the lives of principals a detractor to their desire to pursue the principalship (Pounder & Merrill, 2001b). Although scholars have long petitioned for boundaries that allow school leaders to manage the professional and personal role conflicts, the demand of the job in its present state remains enormous (Eckman & Kelber, 2010).

Principal Pipeline

The principal pipeline has been a concern of educational leaders for more than two decades. News reports and research have often reported the need to bolster the numbers of applicants that are qualified to assume the role of the principal. The Carnine, Denny, Hewitt, and Pijanowski (2008) survey of superintendents revealed that over a 15-year period, the average number of applicants for open principal positions dwindled from 14.8 to 8.7 in Arkansas. In the case of school districts of 499 or fewer students, the number of applicants fell to 6.8 per position. Superintendents further reported that an average of 4.9 applicants met the criteria to be interviewed (Carnine et al., 2008).

A study of 83 school districts covering 10 regions around the United States found that reductions in the number of candidates were more likely to be district-specific or school-specific rather than universal to education in general (Roza et al., 2003). The factors common to districts experiencing shortages were lower socio-economic status, lower per-pupil expenditures, and lower average salaries. In districts with fewer than six applicants per opening, the income was also 20% lower than districts with seven or more applicants. Low applicant districts also had lower per-pupil expenditures than districts with seven or more applicants. Finally, low applicant districts offered lower salaries for

both elementary and secondary school principals. Elementary principals earned 8% less, and secondary principals earned 15% less than their counterparts in districts with more than seven applicants per vacancy (Roza et al., 2003). According to Loeb, Kalogrides, and Horng (2010), principal applicant shortages remain for schools serving students who are poor, non-White, or do not speak English as a native language.

The shortage of qualified principal candidates does not result from contribute a lack of certified applicants to fill the vacancies. In general, there are more certified personnel in each state than there are vacancies for them to fill. Many high-potential leaders do not see the job of principal as personally feasible or adequately supported (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). A closer examination of the literature on the principal shortage reveals that the deficit is in the skills of the applicants rather than the number of applicants. The idea that a strong individual, capable of fulfilling the demands of the job necessary to run an effective school only begins to define the myth of the super-principal (Copland, 2001). The impossibly hierarchical job filled with role conflict continues to serve as a detractor for many who would otherwise desire to pursue the principalship (Grubb & Flessa, 2006; Roza et al., 2003).

Principal preparation programs have also been held culpable for the shortage of qualified principal applicants. Knapp, Copland, and Talbert (2003) theorize that principal preparation programs fail to attract a sufficient amount of high-potential candidates. There is also a great deal of questioning about the capacity for university preparation programs to prepare school leaders (Korach, Ballenger, & Alford, 2011). Arthur Levine (2005), president of President of Teachers College at Columbia University, declared that

> "many of the university-based programs designed to prepare the next generation of educational leaders are engaged in a counterproductive 'race to the bottom,' in which they compete for students by lowering admission standards, watering down course work, and offering faster and less demanding degrees" (p. 24).

Levine further proclaims that the trend of off-site programs in collaboration with school districts were often of lower quality than their campus-based programs and are instructed disproportionally by adjunct faculty. Finally, university programs are accused of providing an irrelevant curriculum that is not seen as germane to the job of principal. Ginty (1995) observed that administrators felt that the preparation program theory left them ill prepared for the reality of the principalship. Ten years later, principals found only 66% of their preparation coursework valuable to the realities of the principalship (Levine, 2005). After an in-depth study of the content of 31 principal preparation programs, researchers at the American Enterprise Institute concluded that preparation program graduates are "ill equipped for the challenges and opportunities posed by an era of accountability" (Hess & Kelly, 2005, p. 40).

The Southern Regional Education Board's (2010) study of principal preparation programs at 22 universities it determined to have pacesetting programs found that efforts at redesign have produced only moderate change at the most willing universities. The inherent weakness of the redesign efforts include

- Lack of collaboration between universities and school districts;
- Failure to create a curriculum that develops the leadership skills necessary to increase student achievement;
- Poor planning, supervision and evaluation of field experiences; and
- Lack of rigorous evaluation strategies for continuously monitoring and measuring program quality and effectiveness (Fry, O'Neill, & Bottoms, 2006, p.9).

SREB further alleges that university faculty members are focused on the producing evidence of meeting standards, faculty rights to choose course content, and enrollment, thus slowing the pace of redesign (Fry, O'Neill, & Bottoms, 2006).

Succession Management

Improving the principal pipeline is a matter of going beyond succession planning towards succession management. Over the past 50 years, theory of succession management within the business realm has evolved from the practice of replacing key leaders to the practice of developing the leadership function within the organization (Groves, 2007). The business sector grapples with how to support the entire pipeline of talent through a comprehensive set of assessment and development practices (Charan, Drotter, & Noel, 2010). Some companies are supporting the pipeline by engaging managerial personnel at all levels to develop leadership capacity to the point of having executives teach the curriculum (Groves, 2007). The progression in succession management and leadership development has led companies to move further toward an integrationist approach of the two concepts.

Successful integration of leadership development and succession management includes several actions taken by organizations. One of the first steps is to assist high-potential leaders in cultivating relationships with an individual mentor as well as building a network of mentors in the organization (Groves, 2007). The function of the mentor is to provide the protégé with both psychosocial benefits and career facilitation benefits (Groves, 2007). Next is the identification and codification of leadership talent throughout the organization (Groves, 2007). The development of multiple high-potential leaders

gives the organization flexibility in process of succession. The converse approach of choosing to develop the "heir-apparent" has many pitfalls, most notably the key person leaving before taking the position and the effect on the morale and lack of retention of those not chosen (Biggs, 2004). With the identification of potential leaders, it is also important to employ a combination of mentoring, leadership development and codification of identification efforts as strategies to increase opportunities to diversify leadership within schools. DeAngelis & O'Connor (2012) studied the patterns of identifying leaders within education. They found that people were likely to identify, or tap people who resembled their own internal and external character traits. Their findings further corroborate the idea that the practice of tapping for leadership identification has served as a disadvantage for women and minorities (DeAngelis & O'Connor, 2012; Myung, Loeb, & Horng, 2011; Pounder & Crow, 2005).

Examining the historical concepts of sponsored and contest mobility, the latter is a better fit within current educational constructs from an egalitarian view of teachers that all are equal and deserve equal opportunity and recognition (Lortie, 2009; Turner, 1960). Sponsored mobility is also closely associated with the social reproduction of inequalities for women and minorities. On the other hand, self-selection of leaders, which occurs through contest mobility, is cited as the source of the shortage of qualified leaders prepared to assume the number of principalships that are expected to be open within the next few years. A better practice is to tap leaders that represent a greater diversity of candidates and to employ a codified set of practices to identify, develop and sustain leadership. Additionally, high-potential applicants are assessed against a specific

framework of competencies that are aligned with the needs of the organization, and movement on and off the list is fluid (Groves, 2007).

The next area of succession management is the dual assignment of developmental activities and promotion of high visibility among leaders throughout the organization (Rothwell, 2010). The developmental activities include career development assignments and professional development. Stretch assignments, or job assignments outside of a person's immediate expertise, permit a high-potential leader to continue learning and stretch their knowledge, thereby increasing their ability to contribute to the organization longitudinally (McCauley, 1995). Citicorp decided to employ stretch assignments to develop leaders by placing people in positions for which they are 60 to 70% qualified. General Electric considered who would benefit or stretch the most as a criterion for filling a position (McCauley, 1995). These organizations are tapping into the developmental aspect of the positions in allowing inherent opportunities for managers to problem-solve and overcome challenges. These types of assignments also bring deficiencies to the forefront and provide a chance for leaders to overcome them with built-in incentives and opportunity.

Principal - Assistant Principal Relationship

Statistics from the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) indicate that 62.1% of principals had experience as an assistant principal/program director prior to assuming the principalship (Fiore & Curtin, 1997). Papa, Lankford and Wyckoff (2002) found that the most common path for a principal was to start as a classroom teacher, ascend to curriculum leader or assistant principal, and then assume the principalship.

Because assistant principals represent the greatest pool for aspiring principals, there is a need to continue to build on the limited research concerning the role of the assistant principal (Marshall & Hooley, 2006). One of the most important aspects of the role of the assistant principal is the relationship to the principal (Goodman & Berry, 2011). As noted earlier, the principal is the most influential factor in the definition of the role of the assistant principal. The evolution of the current role into a true training ground for the principalship is up to the principal's understanding of the assistant principalship. Bottoms, O'Neill, Fry, & Hill (2003) contend that, "only when principals view the assistant principalship as a training ground for future principals does the position mirror the principals' work and allow the apprentice leaders to play a key role in academic achievement" (p. 4). Additionally, Lovely (2004) notes, "if the assistant principal assignments are to serve as a pathway to the principalship, the expectations and experiences of the position must be expanded" (p. 50). In making the assistant principalship a stronger pathway, the principal may need to more closely consider their role of socializing and mentoring the assistant principal.

Marshall, Mitchell, Gross, and Scott (1992) describe socialization as an important task in the success and upward mobility of aspiring principals. The act of socialization is important, as new leaders experience isolation and loneliness in the role. Through the act of socialization, the assistant principal develops the insights and skills to succeed as an administrator. For the assistant principal, socialization may include both formal training and informal daily learning (Normore, 2004). Mertz (2006) found the relationship with the principal to be a significant factor in the socialization process. Furthermore, she found

that the main socialization factors for assistant principals were based on what they lived in the role and what they saw as the example set by the principal. Because they learned to lead schools based on the status quo, assistant principals were ill-prepared to lead in new ways (Mertz, 2006).

The next area of consideration for the principal/assistant principal relationship is the nature of mentoring within the relationship. Currently, the mentoring relationship between the principal and assistant principal is left to chance and can be biased (Marshall & Hooley, 2006). Zellner, Jinkins, Gideon, Doughty, and McNamara (2002) assert that the mentoring relationship is critical in the beginning stages of leadership. The benefits of effective mentoring of the assistant principal include expansion of understanding, self-confidence, and often, more opportunities to engage in non-traditional work assignments (Marshall & Hooley, 2006; Mason, 2007). Key to the mentoring relationship is the empowerment of assistant principals to become better leaders through increased responsibilities along with opportunities for reflection and collaboration with highly effective instructional leaders (Zellner et al., 2002). It is the feedback from mentors that allows the assistant principal to maintain continuous growth as a learner (Marshall & Hooley, 2006). The act of mentoring novice assistant principals also helps to eliminate the role ambiguity of assistant principals who may receive little guidance from the principal and may be reluctant to ask for assistance (Morrison, 2005). According to Crow and Matthews (1998), it is the support that novice administrators receive through the acts

of socialization and mentoring that develops them into empowered and empowering leaders.

Effective School Leadership Practices

The influence of effective leadership for student achievement has been acknowledged by research for several decades. The field of education leadership originated with educational management, which grew from an understanding of industrial models in the 1960s (Bush, 2003). Currently, there is no agreed upon definition of the concept of educational leadership, allowing for several theories. Among the prevailing leadership theories and definitions, common themes of leadership include influence, leadership and values, and leadership and vision (Bush, 2003). The idea of leadership as influence is based on the notion that the process of influence is purposeful and intended to lead to specific outcomes (Cuban, 1988; Yukl, 2007). Another prevalent concept from definitions of leadership includes the need for leadership to unify people around key values (Bush, 2003). One of the major outgrowths of values-based leadership in the educational area is the idea of moral leadership (Fullan, 2003; Greenleaf, 2002; Sergiovanni, 1992). Since the 1960s, social justice leadership theory has added to the conversation about reorganization of schools to ensure that historically marginalized populations receive an equitable education. The last major concept associated with effective leadership is the function of creating and casting vision for the organization. The visionary leader engages in tactics to create enthusiastic followers of the organizational vision.

Social Justice Leadership. The discussion of leadership within a school context cannot address past and current realities or future needs without proper attention to social justice leadership. Social justice leadership centralizes advocacy for issues of equity across race, class, gender, disability, sexual orientation and other historically marginalized groups (Theoharis, 2007). Reframing the school culture into one that embraces diversity at all levels will take preparing the staff to accept the idea of inclusive excellence as a matter of social justice (Deal & Peterson, 2010). The social justice leader encourages followers out of their current comfort zone with the present situation by creating a sense of authentic urgency that will drive the work of equity (Kotter, 2011).

School leaders report that resistance to the social justice agenda comes "directly from the demands of the principalship, the momentum of the status quo, obstructive staff attitudes and beliefs, and insular and privileged parental expectations" (Theoharis, 2007 p. 238). These conditions give credence to the idea that some institutional structures have such a deep-rooted culturally hegemonic base that they will need to be intentionally phased out (Swidler, 1986). Embracing diversity at the student level is something that can happen as a result of changing the cultural cognition of the entire staff. The understanding of how culture mediates experience for students will be key in leading to an authentic acceptance of the cultural assets of students (Leeman & Saharso, 2013; Shore, 1991). In directing resources toward the goal of cultural competency, students will be provided with direct as well as inclusive instruction on cultural differences. Indicators of success of inclusive instruction would be the students' ability to take the position of a

person that represents a racial or cultural understanding different from that of their own group (Williams, 2007).

The roots of social justice leadership within the United States may be traced back to the 1970 English translation of Freire's book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, where he rejects the 'banking' approach to education (Stinson, Bidwell, & Powell, 2012). Critical pedagogy developed as a way for teachers and students to enact critique and agency through a "culture of openness, debate and engagement" (Rowe, 2010, p. 425). The scholarship around critical pedagogies that challenge the "de facto social code of U.S. education" lay the foundation for social justice leadership (Stinson et al., 2012, p. 78). Currently, social justice leadership calls for administrators to "develop a heightened and critical awareness of oppression, exclusion, and marginalization" (Brooks & Miles, 2006, p. 5).

Understanding how the school is a part of the wider society is foundational to migrating to an ethos of transformative leadership where the school "focuses on preparing students to be both individually successful as well as thoughtful, successful, caring, and engaged citizens of the global community" (Shields, 2012, p. 21). Shields (2012) acknowledges the importance of transformational leadership, but claims that it fails to specify "what direction to set, how to develop people, how the organization might be redesigned or what management of the instructional program might mean" (p. 17). Transformative leadership gives direction to transformational leadership by focusing on emancipation, democracy, equity and justice with emphasis on interdependence, interconnectedness and global awareness. In deconstructing the frameworks of power and

privilege, the social justice leader begins to “comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable" in the pursuit of equity (Dunne, 1903).

Distributed Leadership. The individualistic view of leadership that still dominates the field of educational leadership neglects the division of labor that occurs in organizations (Gronn, 2000). Schools, as with other organizations, have multiple leaders who influence the successful implementation of any initiative (Yukl, 2008). Distributed leadership focuses on the interactions among formal and informal leaders in an organization. With the increased amount of responsibility placed on the school leader, there has been a shift to focus on leadership as a function of practice rather than as a function of the formal role (Harris & Spillane, 2008).

Distributed leadership allows a greater maximization of sources of information, data and judgment, and thus increases the overall intelligence and resourcefulness available (Gronn, 2000; Louis et al., 2010). Distributed leadership also opens up the possibility of every member of the organization becoming leaders. Additionally, the development of organizational learning is increased when “knowledge required to solve complex problems is dispersed throughout organizations” (Gronn, 2000, p. 333). Along with support and monitoring of daily activities, the presence of a pattern of distributed leadership has been found to be a key motivator in the commitment of teachers to schools. When teachers felt included in decisions that mattered to them, they were also more committed to the organization (Hulpia & Devos, 2010). Research further confirms that there is a positive relationship between teacher involvement in school decisions and

the improvement in both instruction and student achievement (Louis et al., 2010; Smylie, Lazarus, & Brownlee-Conyers, 1996; York-Barr & Duke, 2004).

When distributed leadership includes parents, parents become more supportive of the school's efforts with greater understanding of the school's issues and priorities (Davis, 2000). This level of collaboration with families goes beyond the superficial level of parental involvement to parental engagement, which has been demonstrated to contribute to increased student achievement across all grade levels (Hill & Tyson, 2009; Jeynes, 2012; Louis, et al., 2010).

The distribution of leadership has also been subjected to empirical study to understand the patterns of distribution that are the most effective in improving schools (Bush, Bell, & Middlewood, 2010). When distributed leadership is found in improving schools, it is strongly associated with purposeful distribution rather than happening by default (Day, Gronn, & Salas, 2004). When leadership is viewed as property of the team rather than property of the individual, then new opportunities for leadership begin to emerge. It is the decentralization of the leadership function that encourages the practice of leadership to become more fluid in an organization. The fluidity is also based on the release of followers being dependent on leaders and evolving to a situation of interdependence where member responsibilities overlap and/or complement each other (Gronn, 2002).

Transformational Leadership. The theory of transformational leadership is based on the work of J. M. Burns (1978) with the argument that transformational leadership "… occurs when one or more persons *engage* [original italics] with others in

such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality" (p. 20). Bass (1995) furthered the development of the theory by adding that transformational leaders

> …Convert followers to disciples; they develop followers into leaders. They elevate the concerns of followers on Maslow's need hierarchy from needs for safety and security to needs for achievement and self-actualization, increase their awareness and consciousness of what is really important, and move them to go beyond their own self-interest for the good of the larger entities to which they belong. The transforming leader provides followers with a cause around which they can rally. (p. 467)

Transformational leadership theory asserts that a few behaviors or practices of leaders can bring about these effects in followers.

The definition and measurement of transformational school leadership has been difficult, as the practice is complex, nuanced, and sensitive to school context. Leithwood, Jantzi and their colleagues (2005) have contextualized the work of Burns and Bass by developing a set of transformational school leadership behaviors that can broadly be categorized under setting directions, helping people, and redesigning the organization. The subsequent transformational school leadership framework explores the relationships of six variables (See Figure 1). The leadership practices have direct and indirect influences on teachers' motivation, capacities, and work settings. To the degree that changed practices, capacities, and work settings are effective, they will improve student learning. The conceptual theory follows Yukl's (2008) assertion that all transformational leadership approaches share the goal of fostering capacity and developing higher levels of personal commitment to organization goals.

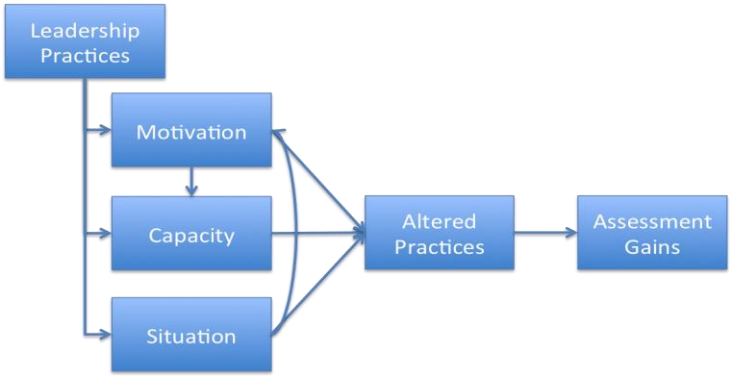

Figure 1: Leithwood & Jantzi Transformational Leadership Framework

The research into the effects of transformational leadership on positively contributing to school conditions and student outcomes is still emerging. Leithwood (2006) argues that the methodology more likely to measure leadership effects on student outcomes is to consider the indirect effects. Leithwood and others researchers have found little success in measuring the direct effects of leadership on student outcomes. School conditions mediate the effect of school leadership and thus the challenge is to identify the alterable conditions that have direct effects on student outcomes (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999; Leithwood, Patten, & Jantzi, 2010; Leithwood & Sun, 2012). Additionally, transformational leadership theory does not predict the behaviors of the actors in the organization or the consequences of those behaviors. For this reason, transformational leadership requires predictable transformations to realize positive outcomes (Leithwood & Sun, 2012). Transformational school leadership does have a positive impact on mediators that have been found to significantly contribute to positive gains in student learning (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). Factors that positively mediate transformational school leadership include school culture, organizational commitment (to school vision),

job satisfaction, changed teacher practices, planning and strategies for change, pedagogical or instructional quality, organizational learning, and collective teacher efficacy. Meta-analysis of student outcomes, as defined by student achievement and student engagement, for the effects of transformational school leadership demonstrated a joint positive effect (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; Sun & Leithwood, 2012).

Research into the effects of transformational school leadership also considers the effect of moderators. An early investigation of moderators found that four broad categories of variables moderated the impact of transformational leadership in schools including: characteristics of the leader's colleagues, characteristics of the leaders themselves, characteristics of student and organizational structures and processes (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). The studies included in the more recent meta-analysis of Sun and Leithwood (2012) encompassed five broad categories of moderators, including student characteristics, school characteristics, teacher background characteristics, principal background characteristics, and parent education. The moderator most closely associated with student achievement was student socioeconomic status. The most positive impact of transformational school leadership was found when studies incorporated both mediating and moderating variables (Sun & Leithwood, 2012). Building collaborative structures and providing individualized supports were discovered to be the practices with the greatest influence on student outcomes. Given the interdependence among the practices, it would be not be advisable for leaders to focus their attention more or less on any of the practices (Leithwood et al., 2010; Sun & Leithwood, 2012).

Conclusion

The historical perspective of the role of the assistant principal offers credence to why there is such a wide variance in the role and why it continues to persist in a state of uncertainty. In its current state, the role is filled with role ambiguity and role conflict, leading to widespread dissatisfaction with the current role and further exasperating the principal pipeline shortage. The relevant literature on the preparation and training for assistant principals demonstrates that there are gaps in the current support structures for assistant principals to be effective in the current position or to be prepared to assume other leadership roles.

The business sector has evolved to focusing on succession management, which develops the leadership function at all levels of the organization. Although schools may incorporate succession ideas from business, it is not sufficient to answer the unique needs of an educational organization. Assistant principals by nature are part of a system that has grown to the point of necessitating distributed leadership. This study endeavors to inquire about how leadership is distributed to assistant principals. Building on research around how leadership impacts student outcomes, the present research inquires about the nature of perceived leadership efficacy and engagement of assistant principals.

Chapter Three: Research Design and Methodology

Introduction

This chapter describes the research design and methodology of the study, including the population, sampling and data collection and analysis. The objective of the chosen methodology was to generate useful information through the collection and analysis of data on the self-reports of assistant principals' capacity and practice levels to implement components of school leadership. Assistant principals were asked to rate their efficaciousness at facilitating school leadership practices and rate the extent to which correlating mediators are present in their schools. The school leadership practices included the five domains of organizational school culture, instructional leadership, school improvement, management, and family and community relations. The indicators are categorized under the domains of school improvement, student engagement, family engagement, teacher collaboration, shared problem-solving, collective efficacy, and district support. The moderators that were considered as part of the research include the background of the assistant principal, dispositions about the principalship, school characteristics, and student characteristics. Student outcomes were measured by school performance level, overall math proficiency, and overall reading proficiency.

Research Questions

The purpose of the study was to determine the current leadership capacity and practice of assistant principals. In order to achieve the objectives, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent are assistant principals engaging in the school leadership domains of facilitating organizational school culture, instructional leadership, school improvement, management, and family and community relations?

2. To what extent do assistant principals report self-efficacy in facilitating the school leadership domains of organizational school culture, instructional leadership, school improvement, management, and family and community relations?

3. How do assistant principals' self-reports of efficacy correlate to the extent of practice of school leadership?

4. What differences exist among assistant principal capacity and practice based on experience, setting and personal characteristics?

Research Design

This research study adopted a quantitative approach using a cross-sectional survey to determine the prevalence and variance of self-reports of assistant principals' capacity and practice based on experience, setting, or personal characteristics. Given that a major portion of this study was an attempt to gather baseline data on the competencies of

assistant principals, a quantitative survey seemed most appropriate. The study was aimed at assistant principals serving in urban public schools in a western state.

Population and Sample

The target population of this study included individuals who serve as assistant principals in urban public schools in a western state. For the purpose of this research, an assistant principal was a person who has completed a principal licensure program and was serving in the administrative role in a public school under the direction of a principal. A person serving as an instructional facilitator or teacher coach of a specific set of subjects but was not involved with the school management and/or the family and community relations were not included in the definition of assistant principal. A person who was involved in an aspect of school management but who was not broadly involved in instructional leadership and/or facilitating a collaborative learning environment would also not be included in the category of assistant principal for the purposes of this research.

The urban district was chosen because it serves the largest number of students in the state and has the greatest percentage of Title I students for a district of its size. The percentage of minority students in this district was significantly higher than the average of the state population.

The sample of assistant principals included school-based administrators who report to the principal, whose job responsibilities are to aid the principal in the planning, implementation, monitoring, and assessment of the strategic direction of the school. An administrator who served as an instructional coach or a dean of discipline was not

included in the sample. An invitation to participate in the research was sent to a closed group of 220 educators that fit the criteria for participation.

The researcher attempted to obtain responses that represented a variety of professional, school, and demographic characteristics. Because one of the research questions sought to determine the variance among competencies of assistant principals, it was desirable to see if there was a correlation of competencies based on school context, professional background, or assistant principal demographic characteristics. Prior research on school leadership has demonstrated that there was a correlation between school context and student achievement (Opdenakker & Damme, 2007).

Survey Instrument

This study used a quantitative approach using a survey designed for leadership preparation programs to gather feedback from program graduates (Kottkamp, 2011; Orr, 2011; Orr, Jackson, & Rorrer, 2009; Orr & Orphanos, 2011; Pounder, 2011; Pounder, 2012). This survey was initially developed by jointly sponsored by the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) and the Learning and Teaching in Educational Leadership (LTEL) Special Interest Group (SIG) of the American Educational Research Association (AERA). Initial versions of the survey from 2000-2007 were compiled from items found on other survey instruments and reviews of pertinent literature from the field. Beginning in 2008, UCEA and leadership from the LTEL Evaluation Research Taskforce reached out to additional members of the research community to develop a survey that was scalable and had the ability to be administered consistently over time. Through the re-development work, the initial surveys were

modified significantly, including item refinement through analysis. In 2011, UCEA began to further strategically plan for and develop the surveys to reflect both the body of research in the area of leadership preparation and to create surveys that held to the standards of rigorous research, including increased reliability and validity. As a result, UCEA convened a group of researchers who worked to create the Initiative for Systemic Program Improvement through Research in Educational Leadership (INSPIRE Leadership) Survey Suite. These surveys focused on the outcomes of principal preparation and the work of principals to provide a 360 degree evaluation of preparation program effectiveness. The survey items come from research studies leadership effectiveness in school improvement (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000; Marks & Printy, 2003) and effective leadership characteristics as defined in the national leadership policy standards from Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), and the Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) standards for program accreditation (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008), and reflect analyses of data previously collected by the UCEA research team and other available or published results.

Preparation programs provide a common experience for both principals and assistant principals because most assistant principals have completed a principal preparation program as a licensure requirement. The use of a survey designed for principal preparation program graduates and aligned to leadership effectiveness in school improvement provides an opportunity to investigate the reality of the work life of assistant principals compared to the expectations of their preparation and the role of the principal. The researcher modified the Leader in Practice Edition of INSPIRE (INSPIRE-

LP) in collaboration with the UCEA Center for the Evaluation of Educational Leadership Preparation and Practice. The modifications allowed the researcher to investigate the amount of time assistant principals devote to leadership capacities and compare the self-reports of leadership capacity and practice. Given that a major portion of this study was an attempt to gather baseline data on the competencies of assistant principals, a quantitative survey seems most appropriate. The survey was administered to assistant principals serving in public schools within one urban district.

The questionnaire consists of 32 questions organized into five sections. Section One collects personal information about the respondent. Section Two collects professional background information. Section Three includes eleven questions that ask the respondent to provide information about his/her school. Section Four includes five questions that ask the respondent to self-report about their level of competency and practice in domains of school leadership. The section that reports about capacity for school leadership domains is a 5-point Likert-type scale (1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree) that asks the respondent his or her level of agreement with his or her ability to facilitate each of the competencies. The section that reports about practice for school leadership domains is a 4-point Likert-type scale (1=never, 2=twice a month, 3= twice per week, 4=every day) that asks the respondent his or her frequency of engagement in each of the competencies. This scale came from the Darling-Hammond, et al. (2007) survey instrument utilized in the Wallace Stanford School Leadership study. Collecting this level of information provided a way to assess the relationship between perceived capacity and the opportunity to engage in the same area of leadership. With

these data, there was the opportunity to conduct descriptive and multivariate correlational analyses. The school leadership competencies section includes subsections where respondents assess their practices of

- Building a Organizational school culture (OSC)
- Sustaining instructional leadership (IL),
- Implementing school improvement (SI),
- Shaping effective management practices (MAN), and
- Promoting healthy family and community relations (FCR).

Section Five includes seven questions aimed at assessing the degree to which certain learning and teaching condition indicators are present in the school. The section that reports about teaching and learning conditions is also a 5-point Likert type scale (1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree) that asks respondents to indicate their agreement with the extent a particular indicator is present at their school. The teaching and learning conditions section includes the sub sections of school improvement, student engagement, family engagement, teacher collaboration, shared problem solving, collective efficacy, and district support. An open-ended question stem was added to the survey instrument to allow the respondents to provide context to their answers. This question stem asked them to complete the statement, "As an assistant principal I believe that I would be more successful if....."

The INSPIRE suite of survey instruments is aligned to Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards, and the Educational Leadership Constituent

Council (ELCC) standards for program accreditation. Although the instrument was not designed to measure transformational school leadership practices, several of the factors measured align with transformational school leadership as defined by Leithwood and Jantzi (2005). See Appendix B to see the correlation between the INSPIRE Leader in practice survey, transformational school leadership behaviors, and ISLLC standards.

The INSPIRE instrument was utilized in its entirety with a few modifications approved by the UCEA Center for the Evaluation of Educational Leadership Preparation and Practice. Instead of choosing from a list of principal preparation programs, respondents were required to name their preparation program. This decision was made because the original instrument only inquired about programs associated with one university and the researcher desired to be able to reflect all programs represented from the sample population. The adapted INSPIRE survey may be found in Appendix A.

Data Collection

In order to maximize the credibility of the survey results, it was critical to increase response rates. For survey administration, several interventions have been proven to increase response rate. Using incentives, increasing the number of contacts with participants, personalizing invitations, crafting invitation messages with skill, and taking the trustworthiness of the sender have been shown to make a significant difference (Bosnjak & Tuten, 2003; Heerwegh & Loosveldt, 2007; Klofstad, Boulianne, & Basson, 2008; Porter & Whitcomb, 2007). This research used the multiple contact and trustworthiness interventions.

Preparing for multiple contacts included Dillman's (2008) recommendations to include a link to the survey and reminder messages. The online survey (Appendix A) was distributed through the www.qualtrics.com (Qualtrics) website, a commercial application service provider offering a range of services, including designing, administering and managing online surveys. The online survey offered three advantages including: (a) ease and inexpensiveness of distribution of a questionnaire to a large number of individuals; (b) interaction with the internet, which allowed respondents to be guided through completion of the questionnaire; and (c) the ease of reliably and accurately transferring data into a statistical software program for analysis (Dillman, 2008). Participants were asked to electronically sign the informed consent in order to participate (Appendix B). A three-phase follow-up sequence was used (Dillman, 2008). To those subjects who did not respond by the set date (1) five days after distributing the survey URL, an e-mail reminder was sent out; (2) ten days after the first reminder, the second e-mail reminder was sent; (3) seven days after the second reminder, the third e-mail reminder was sent stating the importance of the participant's input for the study.

Message trustworthiness was established through several measures. A single web page linked to a university site provided respondents with information about the research, the survey and Institutional Review Board (IRB) information regarding rights as a research participant**.** The page was linked from the solicitation messages, reminder messages and the front page of the survey itself. The survey was managed using Qualtrics with a university logo at the top of the web survey page. The researcher personally responded to any inquiries by assistant principals about the survey or research.

This researcher did not use incentives or over-personalization of the message. Implementing incentives has proven to be a method to produce higher response rates (Heerwegh & Loosveldt, 2007). The current research in the area of incentives demonstrated that a lottery system increased the response rate minimally. Participants usually prefer immediate and tangible rewards rather than delayed or low chance rewards. Without a feasible method to offer immediate and tangible rewards, the incentive plan would not be likely to yield the level of increase in response rate that represents an equal tradeoff for the management of the reward system.

Data Analysis

All statistical analyses of the quantitative results were conducted using Statistical Package for Social Sciences software (SPSS), version 22.0. The data were prepared for analysis initially by coding into numerical values. The data were imported into SPSS with the first step being that of cleaning the data. As the data were recoded into new variables, a detailed codebook was developed.

Respondents that completed less than 90% of the survey were not included in the analysis, dependent upon which data were missing. Of the respondents that considered participation in the research, 6.7% (12) declined to participate based on the consent form. The 33 cases that were deleted based on being incomplete provided responses for up to two out of five of the domains of capacity and practice. These responses were deleted because limited data would be available with their inclusion. Further investigation of the data indicated that there was not a discernable pattern in the missing data in the surveys that were not completed. Since the deleted cases characterized several demographic

features, the idea that missing data were a result of a particular pattern is not supported. Missing data in the areas of student achievement, enrollment and grades served were filled in with publically available school data. After 33 cases were deleted, an overall *n* of 128 was established.

Data screening included the descriptive statistics for all the variables. The item level of the preliminary analysis included running descriptive statistics of all items contained in the survey. A reliability analysis using coefficient alpha of the dimensions, categories and the total instrument was conducted. The reliability analysis is a measure of internal consistency and determines if individuals are responding consistently across items. All measures were correlated to identify statistically significant bivariate associations.

The demographic variables of gender, ethnicity, education, and years of administrative experience were analyzed for frequencies of response among participants. Frequencies of responses to individual questionnaire items by study participants were analyzed. The data for the administrative preparation program were quantified into five categories. Variables for years of experience and age were categorized into groups. The variable for ethnicity was dichotomously categorized into minority and non-minority based numbers of respondents in each category.

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to eliminate the need for calculating three or more separate *t*-tests and guard against Type I error. Independent samples *t*-test was used to determine differences for dichotomous data. This study used

the criterion of 95% confidence level ($p < .05$) to determine statistical significance, which is common practice in educational research (Lomax & Hahs-Vaughn, 2012).

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to provide information regarding the purpose of the study and the methods for the collection and analysis of data. The goal of the study was to understand the leadership competencies of assistant principals.

Chapter Four: Results

The purpose of this study was to explore the leadership capacities and practices of assistant principals and to identify strengths and gaps in practice. The purpose was also to determine what relationships existed between capacity and practice and to see if there was a difference based on context and personal characteristics. Responses to the modified version of the Initiative for Systemic Program Improvement through Research in Educational Leadership (INSPIRE Leadership) – Leader in Practice Survey offered by the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) Center for the Evaluation of Educational Leadership Preparation and Practice were collected through Qualtrics (Qualtrics, 2014) and tabulated in a Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) spreadsheet. Responses were analyzed and verified by variable for appropriate levels of internal reliability. The researcher examined the internal reliability of the survey responses to the five domains (organizational school culture, instructional leadership, school improvement, management, and family and community relations) by running Cronbach's alphas on the data. The alpha on each of the four domains was .75 or greater in all domains with the exception of school management practices ($\alpha = .591$). Cronbach's alpha for each domain can be found in Appendix C.

Surveys were sent to 220 assistant principals from public schools in one large urban western school district. Of the possible respondents, 81.36% (179) began the

survey and 58.63% (128) completed the survey to the point of being included in the research.

Descriptive Demographics of Survey Respondents

Tables 1-12 in this chapter highlight the demographic characteristics of the respondents in this study. Each of the tables of demographic information is presented with the information for both primary and secondary assistant principals. This was done because historically research in the area of assistant principals has focused on secondary assistant principals. The demographic information included on the survey focused on personal information represented by: (a) gender, age, race; (b) academic preparation represented by number of years of teaching experience, number of years of assistant principal experience, highest degree of education and educational licensure; and (c) professional educational experiences characterized by school enrollment, school performance rating, teacher experience and change. This information describes the population who answered the survey.

Answers to the research questions follow the data tables. Data from the demographics used to profile the respondents are reported on tables 1-12. Each of the demographic tables is reported by primary and secondary school levels. Primary schools were defined as a school whose students are predominately in kindergarten through fifth grade. A school whose students are primarily in grades six through twelve defined secondary schools. One school in the group serves students in grades kindergarten through 11th grade. This school was included in the primary group because the majority of the students are in the primary grades. Gender is the first demographic portrayed in

Table 1. The results reflect that 35.8% were male and 64.2% were female. Of the respondents serving in primary schools, 23.2% are male and 76.8% are female. Of the respondents serving in secondary schools, there are an equal number of males and females.

Table 1

Descriptives: Respondents' Gender

		School Level		
		Primary	Secondary	Total
Male	*n*	16	31	48
	Percent	23.9%	50.8%	36.7%
Female	*n*	51	30	81
	Percent	76.1%	49.2%	63.3%
Total	*n*	67	61	128
	Percent	100%	100%	100%

Respondent age is depicted in Table 2. The results are divided by school level and generational level. Any respondent that was born in 1964 or before and represents 22.4% of the total sample defines Baby Boomer Generation. Generation X is defined by those respondents born between 1965 and 1976 and represents 37.3% of the total sample. Millennial Generation is define by respondents born 1977 or after and represents 36.6% of the total sample. Five respondents at the secondary level did not provide year of birth.

Table 2

Descriptives: Respondents' Age By Generation

		School Level		
		Primary	Secondary	Total
Baby Boomer (Born 1964 or before)	*n*	14	14	28
	Percent	20.9%	23.0%	21.9%
Generation X (Born 1965-1976)	*n*	28	22	50
	Percent	41.8%	36.1%	39.1%
Millennial Generation (Born 1977-1986)	*n*	25	20	45
	Percent	37.3	32.8%	35.2%
Total	*n*	67	56	128
	Percent	100%	91.8%	96.1%

Respondent Race/Ethnicity is depicted in Table 3. The results indicate that, while the distribution of White versus non-White administrators is relatively equal among the secondary group, 68% of the primary administrators are White. There is more diversity in the secondary assistant principal group than there is in the primary assistant principal group with more than half of the secondary assistant principal identifying with a non-White race or ethnicity. One secondary administrator did not provide race ethnicity information.

Table 3

Descriptives: Respondents' Race/Ethnicity

		School Level		
		Primary	Secondary	Total
American Indian or Alaska Native	*n*	0	1	1
	Percent	0.0%	1.6%	0.8%
Asian	*n*	1	0	1
	Percent	1.5%	0.0%	0.8%
Bi-Racial/Multi-racial	*n*	0	5	5
	Percent	0.0%	8.2%	3.9%
Black/African American	*n*	8	12	20
	Percent	11.9%	19.7%	15.6%
Hispanic/ Latino/a	*n*	12	11	23
	Percent	17.9%	18.0%	18.0%
White	*n*	46	31	78
	Percent	68.7%	49.2%	58.6%
Other	*n*	0	2	2
	Percent	0.0%	3.3%	1.6%
Total	*n*	67	61	128
	Percent	100%	100%	100%

Table 4 depicts the highest level of education by degree. Of the respondents without a master's degree, one is an administrative intern, two are administrative assistant and one is a traditional assistant principal. The majority (75.0%) of primary and secondary respondents hold a master's degree. Those with a specialist degree are almost evenly split between primary (52%) and secondary (48%). All of the respondents with a terminal degree work in secondary schools.

Table 4

Descriptives: Respondents' Education

		School Level		
		Primary	Secondary	Total
No Graduate Degree	*n*	1	3	4
	Percent	1.5%	4.9%	3.1%
Master's Degree	*n*	53	43	96
	Percent	79.1%	70.5%	75.0%
Specialist Degree	*n*	13	12	25
	Percent	19.4%	19.7%	19.5%
Doctorate	*n*	0	3	3
	Percent	0.0%	4.9%	2.3%
Total	*n*	67	61	128
	Percent	100%	100%	100%

Table 5 depicts respondent pre-administrative educational experiences. This experience is a composite value of years as a teacher, years as a teacher leader, years of other professional educational experience and years of experience in educational agency outside of a school district. The mean experience for the combined group of primary and secondary assistant principals was 16.45 years.

Table 5

Descriptives: Pre-Administrative Educational Experience

		School Level		
		Primary	Secondary	Total
9 or less years	*n*	20	20	40
	Percent	29.9%	32.8%	31.3%
10-14 years	*n*	25	23	48
	Percent	37.3	37.7%	37.5%
15 or More years	*n*	22	18	40
	Percent	32.8%	29.5%	31.3%
Total	*n*	67	61	128
	Percent	100%	100%	100%

The results of Table 6 confirm that the majority of respondents have five or less years of total administrative experience. Primary level assistant principals have more

respondents with 2 or fewer years (49.3%) while secondary assistant principals are equally split between respondents that in the 2 or fewer and 3-5 years of experience categories. Assistant principals with 6 or more years of administrative experience account for 23% of both primary and secondary assistant principal groups.

Table 6

Descriptives: Respondents' Administrative Experience

		School Level		
		Primary	Secondary	Total
2 or fewer years	*n*	33	24	56
	Percent	49.3%	39.3%	43.8%
3-5 years	*n*	18	24	42
	Percent	26.9%	39.3%	32.8%
6 or more years	*n*	16	14	30
	Percent	23.9%	23.0%	23.4%
Total	*n*	69	61	128
	Percent	100%	100%	100%

The results of Table 7 depict the administrative preparation of the assistant principals. The highest number of the respondents obtained licensure through the district university partnership program. A total of 53.9% of the respondents received their licensure through a program that is conducted within the same state as the district in which they serve. Almost equal numbers of respondents from primary and secondary obtained their licensure through a proprietary university program as defined by a for-profit university program. The smallest group was respondents who were confirmed to have completed licensure through an out of state program (6.3%).

Table 7

Descriptives: Administrative Preparation

		School Level		
		Primary	Secondary	Total
District/University Partnership	*n*	25	16	41
	Percent	37.3%	26.2%	32.0%
Other In-State program	*n*	26	19	45
	Percent	38.8%	31.1%	35.2%
Out of state Program	*n*	2	6	8
	Percent	3.0%	9.8%	6.3%
Other Program	*n*	14	20	34
	Percent	20.9%	32.8%	26.6%
Total	*n*	67	61	128
	Percent	100%	100%	100%

The information in Table 8 depicts the size of schools where the respondents worked. The majority of primary schools were in the Tier 3 (40.3%) or Tier 4 (38.8%) size groups. The largest number of secondary schools was in the Tier 4 (39.9) group. There are also a substantial number of secondary schools in the Tier 1 (16.4%) and Tier 2 (24.6%). Of the secondary schools within the Tier 1 size, 9 (90%) were pathways schools, which are secondary options that are an alternative to the comprehensive high school program. Of the secondary schools in the Tier 2 size, 5 (33.3%) were innovative and 7 (46.7%) were in a network of schools going through turnaround.

Table 8

Descriptives: School Size

		School Level		
		Primary	Secondary	Total
Tier 1: 240 students or less	*n*	1	10	11
	Percent	1.5%	16.4%	8.6%
Tier 2: 241-400 students	*n*	13	15	28
	Percent	19.4%	24.6%	21.9%
Tier 3: 401-600 students	*n*	27	6	33
	Percent	40.3%	9.8%	25.8%
Tier 4: 601-1410 students	*n*	26	24	50
	Percent	38.8%	39.3%	39.1%
Tier 5: 1411 or more students	*n*	0	6	6
	Percent	0.0%	9.8%	4.7%
Total	*N*	67	61	128
	Percent	100%	100%	100%

Table 9 depicts the school condition of overall performance ratio. There are five categories of school that are based on the percent of points received on the school performance framework (SPF) rating. Distinguished schools earned at least 80% of the SPF points and represent 6 (4.7%) of the respondents' schools. Schools that meet expectations earned between 51% and 79% of the possible SPF points and represent 53 (41.4%) of the respondents' schools. Accredited on Watch schools earn 40-50% of their possible SPF points and represent 36 (28.1%) of the respondents schools. Accredited on Priority Watch Schools earned 34-39% of the possible SPF points and represents 4 (3.1%) of the respondents' schools. Accredited on Probation schools earned less than 33% of the SPF points and represent 23 (18.0%) of the respondents' schools.

The total SPF points per school differ as a result of several school factors, including levels served, programs, etc. The SPF points possible for primary schools ranged from 121 to 433. The points possible for the secondary schools ranged from 72 to

403. Six of the respondents' schools did not have a 2013 SPF rating as a result of starting in the 2013-2014 school year.

Table 9

Descriptives: School Performance Rating

		School Level		
		Primary	Secondary	Total
Accredited on Probation	*n*	6	17	23
	Percent	9.0%	27.9%	18.0%
Accredited on Priority Watch	*n*	4	0	4
	Percent	6.0%	0.0%	3.1%
Accredited on Watch	*n*	14	22	36
	Percent	20.9%	36.1%	28.1%
Meets Expectations	*n*	37	16	53
	Percent	55.2%	26.2%	41.4%
Distinguished	*n*	5	1	6
	Percent	7.5%	1.6%	4.7%
Total	*n*	66	56	122
	Percent	98.5%	91.8%	95.3%

Aggregate teaching experience is depicted in Table 10. This variable depicts the ratio of teachers with less than three years of teaching experience at the school. At the secondary level, there was a significant relationship between the amount of teachers with less than three years of experience and the school performance, r (120)= -.34, p<. 001. Teacher experience was significantly correlated with free and reduced lunch enrollment, r (116)=. 33, p<. 001 special education enrollment, r (116)=.34, p<.001 and minority enrollment, r(116)=.39, p<.001.

Table 10

Descriptives: Teaching Staff with less than 3 Years of Experience

		School Level		
		Primary	Secondary	Total
Less than 20%	*n*	27	21	48
	Percent	40.3%	34.4%	37.2%
20-30%	*n*	23	10	33
	Percent	34.3%	16.4%	25.6%
31-49.9%	*n*	8	9	17
	Percent	11.9%	14.8%	13.2%
More than 50%	*n*	5	21	26
	Percent	7.5%	34.4%	20.2%
Total	*n*	63	61	124
	Percent	94.0%	100.0%	96.1%

Within this study, assistant principals were categorized by job type. The first group is composed of traditional assistant principals. The second group is composed of administrative assistants and includes administrators who remain on the teacher contract, but complete the majority of the duties of a traditional assistant principal. The third group consists of administrative interns who are in the process of completing their administrative licensure through a university district partnership. The respondents have a paid full-time internship with a mentor principal. The fourth group consists of principal residents who are being prepared to assume the principal role in the next year. During the year-long assignment, the principal resident engages in any of the responsibilities asked of an assistant principal and is gradually given more responsibility as the year progress.

Table 11 demonstrates that the majority of assistant principals for both secondary and primary respondents are traditional in nature. Administrative assistants (65.4%) and administrative interns (77.8%) are found more frequently at the primary level. Principal residents (72.3%) are found more frequently at the secondary level.

Table 11

Descriptives: Administrator Type

		School Level		
		Primary	Secondary	Total
Traditional AP	*n*	39	43	82
	Percent	58.2%	70.5%	64.1%
Administrative Assistant	*n*	17	9	26
	Percent	25.4%	14.4%	20.3%
Administrative Intern	*n*	7	2	9
	Percent	10.4%	3.3%	7.0%
Principal Resident	*n*	4	7	11
	Percent	6.0%	11.5%	8.6%
Total	*n*	67	61	128
	Percent	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The positive change index is a composite score of several school factors. The factors included in the change index include the change in overall school performance, change in attendance rate, change in suspension rate, change in enrollment, and change in reading, writing, and math proficiency. Each of the individual scores was converted into Z scores to allow each of the school factors to have equal influence on the overall score. Although there was a moderate correlation between the change index and state school performance rating r (125) = .37, p <001, the results did not always rank the schools in the same order. This is because the school performance metric measures achievement on many factors and the change index measures positive and negative change on many of the same factors. Table 12 demonstrates that more than half of the respondents worked at a school with a negative change index. There was a greater variance in the primary respondents (10.310) than in the secondary respondents (8.046).

Table 12

Descriptives: Change Index

		School Level		
		Primary	Secondary	Total
Negative Change – greater than -1	*n*	16	17	33
	Percent	23.9%	27.9%	25.8%
Negative Change – -1- 0	*n*	13	25	38
	Percent	19.4%	41.0%	29.7%
Positive Change – 0-1	*n*	19	11	30
	Percent	28.4%	18.0%	23.4%
Positive Change – Greater than 1	*n*	19	7	26
	Percent	28.4%	11.5%	20.3%
Total	*n*	67	60	127
	Percent	100.0%	98.4%	99.2%

Findings Related To Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. To what extent are assistant principals engaging in the school leadership domains of facilitating organizational school culture, instructional leadership, school improvement, management, and family and community relations?

2. To what extent do assistant principals report self-efficacy in facilitating the school leadership domains of organizational school culture, instructional leadership, school improvement, management, and family and community relations?

3. How do assistant principals' self-reports of efficacy correlate to the extent of practice of school leadership?

4. What differences exist among assistant principal capacity and practice based on experience, setting and personal characteristics?

Findings for Research Question One. To what extent are assistant principals engaging in the school leadership domains of facilitating organizational school culture, instructional leadership, school improvement, management, and family and community relations? Respondents rated their level of engagement in leadership competencies within each of the five domains of school leadership. Respondents had the choice to delineate their engagement in each of the competencies as never =1, once per month =2, twice per week =3 and daily =4. Mean scores were calculated for each item and are displayed in tables.

Table 13 indicates the five highest mean scores of engagement ranging from 3.45 to 3.73 ranked in descending order. The five highest-ranking competencies were found within three different domains: organizational school culture, school improvement and management. The composite score for the domain of organizational school culture (*M* = 3.21, *SD* = .51) was the highest among all the domains.

Table 13

Mean Scores –Five Most Frequent Competencies of Leadership Practice

	Primary		Secondary		Total	
	Mean	*SD*	Mean	*SD*	Mean	*SD*
Use clear ethical principles to guide decision making and problem solving (OSC)	3.69	0.66	3.80	0.48	3.73	0.58
Manage discipline effectively (M)	3.09	0.91	3.12	0.98	3.66	0.68
Promote effectiveness in serving all students well (OSC)	3.51	0.67	3.67	0.68	3.57	0.68
Establish high expectations for student learning (SI)	3.52	0.80	3.62	0.78	3.56	0.79
Build a collaborative environment (OSC)	3.38	0.65	3.53	0.70	3.45	0.68

Table 14 indicates the five lowest mean scores of engagement behaviors ranging from 2.20 to 2.53 ranked in ascending order. Three different domains (School Improvement, Management, and Instructional Leadership) were included in the top five competencies. The composite scores for the domains of Instructional Leadership (M = 2.61, SD =.64) and School Improvement (M = 2.72, SD = .69) were respectively the lowest among all the domains. The entire chart can be seen in Appendix C.

Table 14

Mean Scores –Five Least Frequent Competencies of Leadership Practice

	Primary		Secondary		Total	
	Mean	*SD*	Mean	*SD*	Mean	*SD*
Evaluate curriculum for its use and effectiveness (SI)	2.25	0.94	2.12	0.94	2.20	0.95
Redesign the school's organization to enhance teaching and learning (SI)	2.25	0.98	2.19	0.96	2.24	0.97
Align professional development activities for teachers based on identified instructional needs (IL)	2.17	0.79	2.33	0.86	2.25	0.82
Support professional development activities for teachers (IL)	2.38	0.77	2.55	0.75	2.46	0.75
Recruit, hire, and retain high quality personnel (M)	2.56	0.86	2.45	1.02	2.53	0.94

Composite mean scores for each domain of school leadership practice were calculated, with the results reported in Table 15. The results indicate that the respondents spend more time each month on organizational school culture and management and less time on school improvement and instructional leadership behaviors. A composite mean score for all leadership practice questions were calculated (M = 2.61, SD = .46).

Table 15

Leadership Practices Composite Mean Scores by Domain

Domain	# of Questions	Mean	*SD*
Organizational School Culture	9	3.21	0.51
Management	4	3.05	0.64
Family & Community Relations	4	2.99	0.70
School Improvement	6	2.72	0.69
Instructional Leadership	5	2.61	0.64

Table 16 summarizes the findings from the school leadership practices. The respondents engaged in the majority of organizational school culture practices on either a daily or twice a week basis. A greater number of the respondents fostered staff sensitivity to students' diversity less than twice per month (43, 33.59%). There was also a gap in the practice of building and sustaining an educational vision for a school, with 34.38% (*n*=44) engaging twice a month and 8.59% (*n*=11) never having the opportunity to engage.

The mean (M = 2.61, SD = .064) for the domain of instructional leadership was the lowest for all five domains of practice. There was not a leadership competency where 75% or more the respondents engaged in instructional leadership practice more than twice per week. There is the least amount of engagement in support of professional development for teachers. 32.52% (n = 40) engage in the alignment of professional development activities for teachers based on identified instructional needs with 15.63% (n= 20) never engaging. 43.55% (n = 60) engage in the support of professional development activities for teachers with 7.03% (n= 9) never engaging. The greatest competency of engagement for instructional leadership is working with teachers to

change content and instructional methods if students are not doing well and providing constructive feedback to teachers to improve instruction.

Within the domain of school improvement, respondents spent the greatest amount of time establishing high expectations for student learning with 90.24% (*n* = 111) engaging twice a week or daily. Fewer respondents reported engagement in the evaluation of curriculum for its use and effectiveness with 31.40% (*n* = 38) engaging twice a week or daily and 23.44% (*n* = 30) never engaging. Fewer respondents reported engagement in redesigning the school's organization to enhance teaching and learning with 28.69% (*n* = 35) engaging twice a week or daily and 21.88% (*n* = 28) never engaging.

Within the domain of management, respondents spent the greatest amount of time managing discipline with 91.13% (*n* = 113) engaging twice a week or daily. Although 64.80% (*n* = 81) engage in the management of facilities and their maintenance to promote a safe and orderly learning environment, 18.75% (*n* = 24) never engage. Additionally, 39.02% (*n* = 48) engage in the recruitment, hiring and retention of high quality personnel on a twice weekly or daily basis, 10.16% (*n* = 13) never engage.

Within the domain of family and community relations, engagement in building and sustaining positive relationships with families and caregivers occurred twice a week or daily for 85.48% (*n* = 106) of respondents. Additionally, 81.45% (*n* = 101) communicate effectively with families and caregivers twice a week or daily. Respondents spend less time engaging in building and sustaining positive relationship with community partners, and communicating effectively with community partners. Of the respondents,

52.34% (*n* = 72) build and sustain relationships and 56.25% (*n* = 72) communicate twice a month or less.

The results indicate that respondents practice instructional leadership at a less frequent rate than any of the other domains. The domain of instructional leadership was the domain where there was the least amount of practice for these assistant principals. Additionally, school improvement was the domain where respondents were most likely to never engage in one or more of the competencies. Conversely, 75% of assistant principals engaged in some level twice per week or more within the practice of organizational school culture.

Respondents spent the most time setting high expectations for students, managing discipline and building positive relationships with families and caregivers. This means that they spend the most time in contact with the diverse stakeholders that the school is attempting to serve. School principals could utilize these competencies as strengths to inform school improvement practices, but these results indicated that assistant principals spend less time in the strategic aspects of leadership such as building a vision for the school or fostering diversity. These experiences give assistant principals the knowledge to be able to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum and to align professional development for teachers based on student need. The time that assistant principals spend in the domains of organizational school culture and building strong relationships with families provides the potential for them to significantly impact the domains of school improvement and instructional leadership.

Table 16

School Leadership Practice Scores

	N	Never	Twice a Month	Twice a Week	Daily
Organizational School Culture					
Promote effectiveness in serving all students well	123	1 0.78%	10 7.81%	28 21.88%	84 65.63%
Build a collaborative environment	124	0 0.00%	13 10.16%	42 32.81%	69 53.91%
Foster staff sensitivity to student diversity	125	5 3.91%	43 33.59%	32 25.00%	45 35.16%
Work with staff to solve school or department problems	125	1 0.78%	31 24.22%	29 22.66%	64 50.00%
Build and sustain an educational vision for a school	124	11 8.59%	44 34.38%	19 14.84%	50 39.06%
Use clear ethical principles to guide decision making and problem solving	123	1 0.78%	6 4.69%	18 14.06%	98 76.56%
Encourage staff members' initiative and innovative efforts	123	4 3.13%	18 14.06%	51 39.84%	50 39.06%
Engage staff in comprehensive planning for school improvement	125	7 5.47%	54 42.19%	41 32.03%	23 17.97%
Facilitate shared leadership.	125	6 4.69%	22 17.19%	40 31.25%	57 44.53%
Instructional Leadership					
Work with teachers to change content and instructional methods if students are not doing well	125	5 3.91%	45 35.16%	55 42.97%	20 15.63%
Provide constructive feedback for teachers to improve instruction	125	5 3.91%	33 25.78%	60 46.88%	27 21.09%
Support differentiated instruction to enhance student learning	122	6 4.69%	48 37.50%	41 32.03%	27 21.09%
Support professional development activities for teachers	124	9 7.03%	61 47.66%	43 33.59%	11 8.59%
Align professional development activities for teachers based on identified instructional needs	123	20 15.63%	63 49.22%	30 23.44%	10 7.81%

(continued)

Table 16 (continued)

	N	Never	Twice a Month	Twice a Week	Daily
School Improvement					
Create a coherent educational program across the school	120	22 17.19%	37 28.91%	26 20.31%	35 27.34%
Promotes a curriculum that supports college and career readiness	124	23 17.97%	30 23.44%	34 26.56%	37 28.91%
Evaluate curriculum for its use and effectiveness	121	30 23.44%	53 41.41%	27 21.09%	11 8.59%
Redesign the school's organization to enhance teaching and learning	122	28 21.88%	59 46.09%	19 14.84%	16 12.50%
Establish high expectations for student learning	123	4 3.13%	8 6.25%	23 17.97%	88 68.75%
Use school or district data to measure school progress	124	6 4.69%	33 25.78%	47 36.72%	38 29.69%
Management					
Manage school resources effectively and efficiently (e.g. personnel, instructional time, supplies/equipment)	125	7 5.47%	28 21.88%	38 29.69%	52 40.63%
Manage discipline effectively	124	2 1.56%	9 7.03%	16 12.50%	97 75.78%
Manage facilities and their maintenance to promote a safe and orderly learning environment	125	24 18.75%	20 15.63%	28 21.88%	53 41.41%
Recruit, hire, and retain high quality personnel	123	13 10.16%	62 48.44%	25 19.53%	23 17.97%
Family & Community Relations					
Build and sustain positive relationships with families and caregivers	124	3 2.34%	15 11.72%	31 24.22%	75 58.59%
Communicate effectively with families and caregivers	124	0 0.00%	23 17.97%	32 25.00%	69 53.91%
Build and sustain positive relationships with community partners	124	11 8.59%	56 43.75%	27 21.09%	30 23.44%
Communicate effectively with community partners	121	10	62	24	25

Findings for Research Question Two. To what extent do assistant principals report self-efficacy in facilitating the school leadership domains of organizational school culture, instructional leadership, school improvement, management, and family and community relations? Each competency was rated on a Likert scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Mean scores were calculated for each domain and are displayed in charts according to primary and secondary school categories. Table 17 indicates the mean scores of the five highest competencies, ranging from 4.31 to 4.52. The highest competencies were found within three different domains: family and community relations, organizational school culture, and school improvement. Family and community relations (M = 4.25, SD = .67) and organizational school culture (M = 4.20, SD = .43) accounted for two of the five highest competencies and the highest composite competencies respectively.

Table 17

Mean Scores –Five Highest Competencies of Leadership Capacity

	Primary		Secondary		Total	
	Mean	*SD*	Mean	*SD*	Mean	*SD*
Establish high expectations for student learning (OSC)	4.52	0.56	4.53	0.54	4.52	0.54
Use clear ethical principles to guide decision making and problem solving (OSC)	4.40	0.58	4.52	0.60	4.46	0.58
Build and sustain positive relationships with families and caregiver (FCR)	4.43	0.61	4.45	0.7	4.45	0.66
Communicate effectively with families and caregivers (FCR)	4.31	0.72	4.41	0.62	4.36	0.67
Use school or district data to measure school progress (SI)	4.27	0.67	4.37	0.58	4.31	0.62

Table 18 indicates the five lowest competencies' mean scores ranging from 3.54 to 3.96. Two domains were included in the five lowest competencies including

instructional leadership and school improvement. School improvement (M = 3.96, SD = .57) and instructional leadership (M = 4.09, SD = .62) each accounted for the two lowest composite competencies respectively.

Table 18

Mean Scores –Five Lowest Competencies of Leadership Capacity

	Primary		Secondary		Total	
	Mean	*SD*	Mean	*SD*	Mean	*SD*
Align professional development activities for teachers based on identified instructional needs (IL)	3.92	0.87	4.00	0.84	3.96	0.84
Promotes a curriculum that supports college and career readiness (SI)	3.84	0.86	3.98	1.00	3.91	0.93
Create a coherent educational program across the school (SI)	3.76	0.91	3.85	0.94	3.79	0.93
Redesign the school's organization to enhance teaching and learning (SI)	3.67	0.84	3.74	0.79	3.71	0.80
Evaluate curriculum for its use and effectiveness (SI)	3.54	0.94	3.55	0.95	3.54	0.94

Composite mean scores for each domain of school leadership capacity was calculated, with the results reported in Table 19. The results indicate that the respondents had more self-efficacy in the domains of organizational school culture and management and less time on school improvement and instructional leadership practice. A composite mean score for all leadership capacity questions was calculated (M = 4.12, SD = .45).

Table 19

Leadership Capacity Composite Mean Scores by Domain

Domain	# of Questions	Mean	*SD*
Family & Community Relations	4	4.25	0.67
Organizational School Culture	9	4.20	0.43
Management	4	4.12	0.64
Instructional Leadership	5	4.09	0.62
School Improvement	6	3.96	0.57

Table 20 indicates the respondents' self-reports about their efficacy in each of the leadership domains. Within the domain of organizational school culture, respondents consistently reported high levels of efficacy in each of the individual competencies. The data indicated that 83.59% (n =107) of respondents (N =128) reported that they agree or strongly agree that they have self-efficacy in their ability to build and sustain an educational vision for a school, yet 15.63% (n =20) were undecided about or did not have self-efficacy in their ability. The data indicated that 84.38% (n =108) of respondents (N =128) reported that they agree or strongly agree that they have self-efficacy in their ability to facilitate shared leadership while 15.63% (n =20) were undecided about or did not have self-efficacy.

In the domain of instructional leadership, 85% of respondents indicated they agree or strongly agree that they are efficacious in their ability to work with teachers to change content, provide constructive feedback, and support professional development. The data indicated that 81.25% (n =104) of respondents (N =128) reported that they agree or strongly agree that they have self-efficacy in their ability to support differentiated instruction to enhance student learning while 15.63% (n =20) were undecided about or did not have self-efficacy. The data also indicated that 75.61% (n =93) of respondents (N =123) reported that they agree or strongly agree that they have self-efficacy in their ability to align professional development activities for teachers based on identified instructional needs while 24.39% (n =30) were undecided about or did not have self-efficacy.

School improvement is the lowest domain of capacity for respondents. Respondents indicated that 24% or more were undecided or did not have self-efficacy in the competencies of creating a coherent educational program, promoting a college and career readiness curriculum, evaluating the effectiveness of curriculum, and redesigning the school's organization. In the domain management, 75% of respondents agree or strongly agree in their efficacy to manage each of the competencies. In the domain of family and community relations, 80% of respondents agree or strongly agree in their efficacy to manage each of the competencies.

Overall, respondents indicated that they agree or strongly agree in their efficacy for school leadership 85.50% of the time. The high level of capacity to establish high expectations for students is supported by the high levels of capacity to use district and school data to measure progress, provide constructive feedback for teachers, and building a collaborative school environment. Perceived levels of competency in these areas means that assistant principals believe that they have the potential to promote school effectiveness by serving all students collectively and individually.

Conversely, instructional leadership was not included in the highest five competencies, and school improvement made up four of five of the lowest competencies. The findings for Research Question One indicate that assistant principals do not report a significant amount time spent in instructional leadership work. If assistant principals obtain school principal positions, they will need to develop their instructional leadership skills to be able to redesign the school in order to create a coherent educational program that supports college and career readiness. As part of the process, they will also have to

increase their capacity to evaluate the curriculum for its effectiveness and in turn align professional development based on identified student needs. Higher levels of capacity in the domains of instructional leadership and school improvement would also lead to increased capacity in organizational school culture as there is a stronger foundation for a sustained educational vision for the school.

Table 20

School Leadership Capacity Scores

	N	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
Organizational School Culture						
Promote effectiveness in serving all students well	128	0 0.00%	2 1.56%	8 6.25%	88 68.75%	30 23.44%
Build a collaborative environment	128	0 0.00%	3 2.34%	5 3.91%	75 58.59%	45 35.16%
Foster staff sensitivity to student diversity	127	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	13 10.24%	73 57.48%	41 32.28%
Work with staff to solve school or department problems	128	0 0.00%	1 0.78%	8 6.25%	75 58.59%	44 34.38%
Build and sustain an educational vision for a school	128	0 0.00%	4 3.13%	16 12.50%	66 51.56%	41 32.03%
Use clear ethical principles to guide decision making and problem solving	128	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	2 1.56%	63 49.22%	63 49.22%
Encourage staff members' initiative and innovative efforts	126	0 0.00%	4 3.17%	12 9.52%	70 55.56%	42 33.33%
Engage staff in comprehensive planning for school improvement	128	0 0.00%	4 3.13%	21 16.41%	68 53.13%	33 25.78%
Facilitate shared leadership.	128	0 0.00%	3 2.34%	17 13.28%	70 54.69%	38 29.69%

(continued)

Table 20 (continued)

	N	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
Instructional Leadership						
Work with teachers to change content and instructional methods if students are not doing well	126	1 0.79%	2 1.59%	12 9.52%	80 63.49%	31 24.60%
Provide constructive feedback for teachers to improve instruction	125	0 0.00%	5 4.00%	7 5.60%	69 55.20%	44 35.20%
Support differentiated instruction to enhance student learning	128	0 0.00%	5 3.91%	15 11.72%	66 51.56%	38 29.69%
Support professional development activities for teachers	125	0 0.00%	7 5.60%	9 7.20%	76 60.80%	33 26.40%
Align professional development activities for teachers based on identified instructional needs	123	0	9	21	60	33
School Improvement						
Create a coherent educational program across the school	126	2 1.59%	11 8.73%	23 18.25%	64 50.79%	26 20.63%
Promotes a curriculum that supports college and career readiness	127	1 0.79%	11 8.66%	19 14.96%	61 48.03%	35 27.56%
Evaluate curriculum for its use and effectiveness	127	2 1.57%	20 15.75%	23 18.11%	69 54.33%	13 10.24%
Redesign the school's organization to enhance teaching and learning	125	0 0.00%	14 11.20%	21 16.80%	77 61.60%	13 10.40%
Establish high expectations for student learning	126	0 0.00%	0.00%	2 1.59%	55 43.65%	69 54.76%
Use school or district data to measure school progress	127	0 0.00%	2 1.57%	5 3.94%	71 55.91%	49 38.58%

(continued)

Table 20 (continued)

	N	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
Management						
Manage school resources effectively and efficiently	126	1 0.79%	3 2.38%	13 10.32%	76 60.32%	33 26.19%
Manage discipline effectively	126	0 0.00%	7 5.56%	12 9.52%	61 48.41%	46 36.51%
Manage facilities and their maintenance to promote a safe and orderly learning environment	126	1 0.79%	8 6.35%	17 13.49%	63 50.00%	37 29.37%
Recruit, hire, and retain high quality personnel	126	1 0.79%	1 0.79%	12 9.52%	61 48.41%	51 40.48%
Family & Community Relations						
Build and sustain positive relationships with families and caregivers	125	0 0.00%	2 1.60%	3 2.40%	56 44.80%	64 51.20%
Communicate effectively with families and caregivers	126	0 0.00%	2 1.59%	8 6.35%	59 46.83%	57 45.24%
Build and sustain positive relationships with community partners	125	1 0.80%	5 4.00%	14 11.20%	59 47.20%	46 36.80%
Communicate effectively with community partners	125	1 0.80%	7 5.60%	17 13.60%	58 46.40%	42 33.60%

Findings for Research Question Three. How do assistant principals' self-reports of efficacy correlate to the extent of practice of school leadership? Measurements were taken from the capacity and practice indicators of school leadership. Pearson's' Product-Moment Correlation coefficient (denoted by *r*) was utilized to calculate the strength of the relationship between the capacity and practice of assistant principals. According to Mertens (2014), the closer the coefficients range from +1.0 or -1.0, the greater the strength of the relationship. The guideline generally used in social science research for interpreting effect size of correlations is 1.0 to 0.05 = strong relationship; 0.03 to 0.05 = moderate relationship; 0.01 to 0.03 = weak relationship (Cohen, 1988). All five domains

of school leadership show a moderate relationship between capacity and practice as shown in Table 21.

Table 21

Correlation between School Leadership Capacity and Practice

	Organizational School Culture	Instructional Leadership	School Improvement	Management	Family Community Relations
Pearson Correlation	.439**	.463**	.442**	.432**	.352**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.001	.001	.001	.001
N	112	122	122	123	121

**Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level (2-tailed).

Findings 3.1 through 3.28 present the results of the data as correlated between capacity and practice in each of the competencies. The findings also highlight strong correlations between capacity and practice and other competencies.

Finding 3.1. The data indicated that there was a moderate correlation between capacity and practice in the ability to promote effectiveness in serving all students well $r(121) = .31$, $p < .001$.

Finding 3.2. The data indicated that there was a moderate correlation between capacity and practice in the ability to build a collaborative environment $r(122) = .43$, $p < .001$. There was also a strong correlation between the capacity to build a collaborative environment and the capacity to engage staff in comprehensive planning for school improvement $r(124) = .53$, $p < .001$; the capacity to facilitate shared leadership $r(126) = .60$, $p < .001$; and the capacity to professionaly develop teachers $r(123) = .53$, $p < .001$. There was a strong correlation between the practice of building a collaborative enviroment and the practice of facitilating shared leadership $r(121) = .59$, $p < .001$.

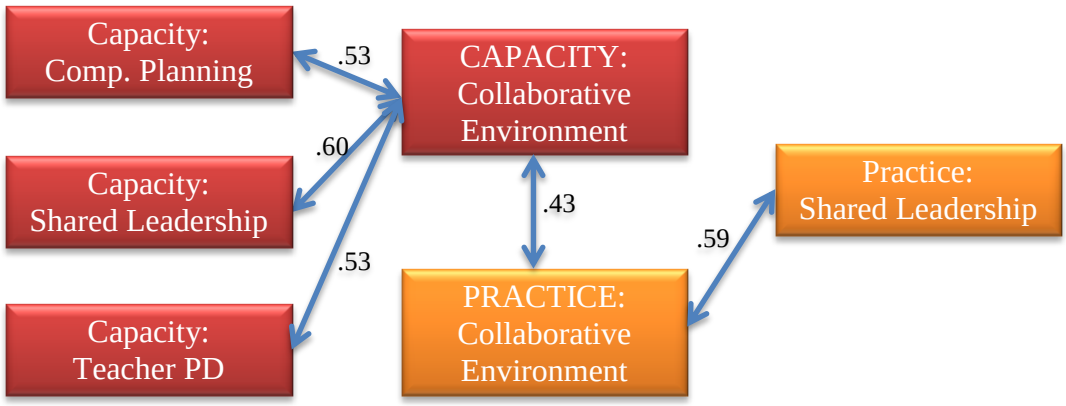

Figure 2: Correlations for Building a Collaborative Envionment

Finding 3.3. The data indicated that there was a moderate correlation between capacity and practice in the ability to foster staff sensitivity to student diversity $r(122) = .49$, $p < .001$.

Finding 3.4. The data indicated that there was a moderate correlation between capacity and practice in the ability to work with staff to solve school or department problems $r(123) = .33$, $p < .001$. There was a strong correlation between the capactiy to work with staff to solve school or department problems and the capacity to encourage staff members' initiative and innovative efforts $r(126) = .52$, $p < .001$.

Finding 3.5. The data indicated that there was a weak correlation between capacity and practice in the ability to build and sustain an educational vision for a school $r(122) = .29$, $p < .001$.

Finding 3.6. The data indicated that there was a moderate correlation between capacity and practice in the ability to use clear ethical principles to guide decision making and problem solving $r(121) = .35$, $p < .001$.

Finding 3.7. The data indicated that there was a moderate correlation between capacity and practice in the ability to encourage staff members' initiative and innovative efforts $r(121) = .44$, $p < .001$. There was a strong correlation between the capacity to encourage staff members' initiative and innovative efforts and the capacity to engage staff in comprehensive planning for school improvement $r(124) = .56$, $p < .001$. There was a strong correlation between the frequency of practice of encouraging staff members' initiative and innovative efforts and the practice of engaging staff in comprehensive planning for school improvement $r(121) = .53$, $p < .001$; and with the practice of facilitating shared leadership $r(121) = .51$, $p < .001$.

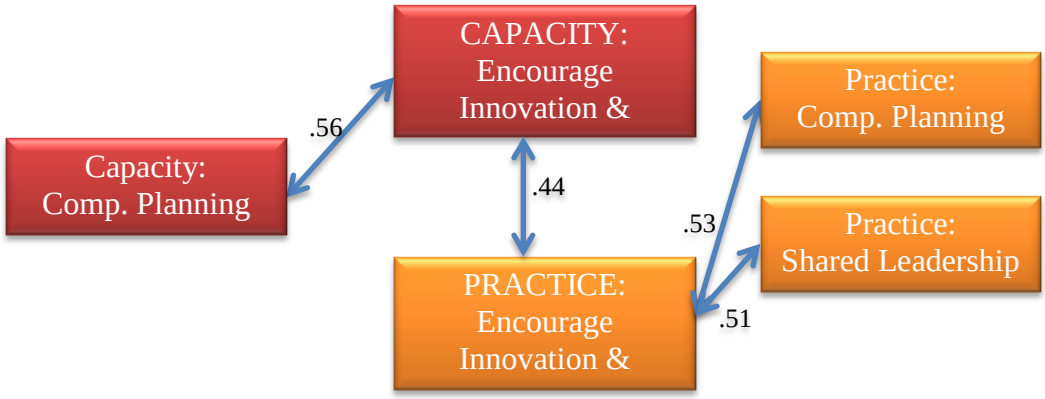

Figure 3: Correlations for Encouraging Innovation and Initiative

Finding 3.8. The data indicated that there was a moderate correlation between capacity and practice in the ability to engage staff in comprehensive planning for school improvement $r(121) = .40$, $p < .001$. There was a strong correlation between the capacity to engage staff in comprehensive planning for school improvement and the capacity to facilitate shared leadership $r(124) = .55$, $p < .001$.

Finding 3.9. The data indicated that there was a strong correlation between capacity and practice in the ability to facilitate shared leadership. $r(123) = .54$, $p < .001$. There was a strong correlation between the capacity to facilitate shared leadership and the capacity to professionally develop teachers $r(123) = .52$, $p < .001$.

Finding 3.10. The data indicated that there was a strong correlation between capacity and practice in the ability to work with teachers to change content and instructional methods if students are not doing well $r(122) = .55$, $p < .001$. The data indicated that there was a strong correlation between the capacity to work with teachers to change content and instructional methods and the capacity to provide constructive feedback $r(123) = .73$, $p < .001$; the capacity to support differentiated instruction $r(122) = .67$, $p < .001$; the capacity to support professional development activities $r(123) = .52$, $p < .001$; and the capacity to align professional development activites based on identified instructional needs $r(121) = .53$, $p < .001$. There was a strong correlation between the practice of working with teachers to change content and instructional methods and the practice of providing constructive feedback to teachers $r(123) = .61$, $p < .001$; and the practice of supporting differentiated instruction to enhance student learning $r(120) = .57$, $p < .001$.

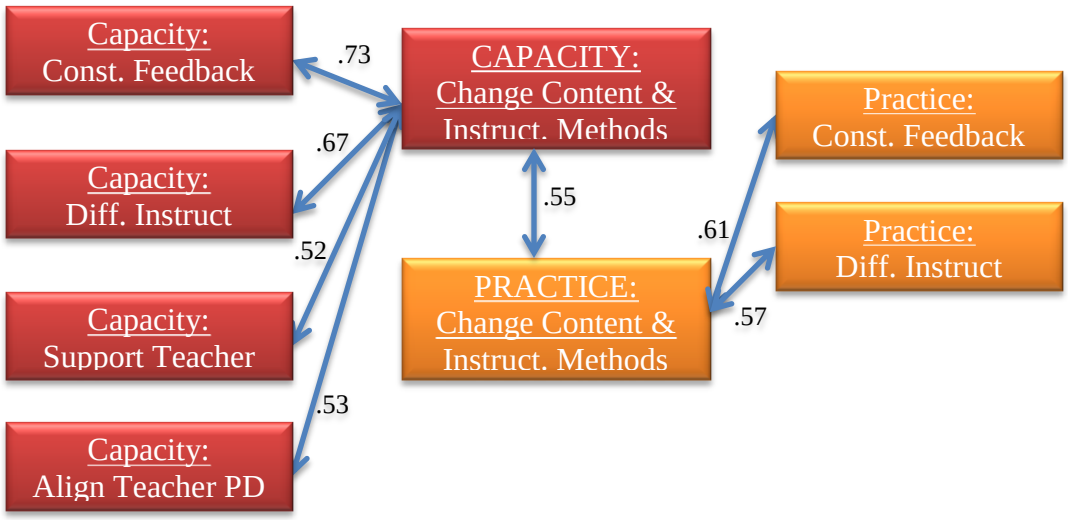

Figure 4: Correlations for Supporting Content Change

Finding 3.11. The data indicated that there was a moderate correlation between capacity and practice in the ability to provide constructive feedback for teachers to improve instruction $r(121) = .35$, $p < .001$. There was a strong relationship between the capacity to provide constructive feedback to improve instruction and the capacity to support differentiated instruction $r(121) = .69$, $p < .001$; the capacity to support professional development activites for teachers $r(122) = .53$, $p < .001$; and the capacity to align professional developments activites based on identified instructional needs $r(121) = .50$, $p < .001$. There was a strong correlation between the practice of providing constructive feedback for teachers to improve instruction and the practice of supporting differentiated instruction to enhance student learning $r(120) = .68$, $p < .001$.

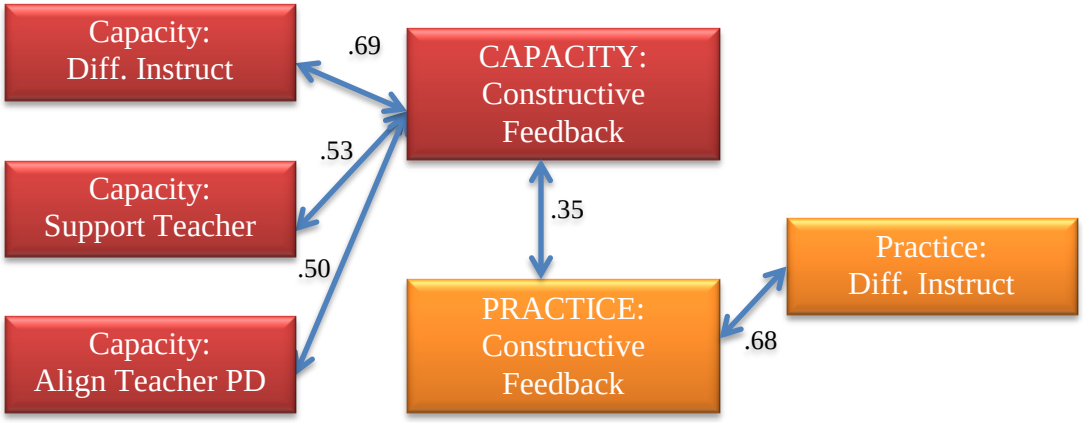

Figure 5: Correlations for Supporting Differentiated Instruction

Finding 3.12. The data indicated that there was a strong correlation between capacity and practice in the ability to support differentiated instruction to enhance student learning $r(117) = .53$, $p < .001$. There was a strong correlation between the capacity to support differentiated instruction to enhance student learning and the capacity to support professional development activities for teachers $r(122) = .58$, $p < .001$; the capacity to align professional development based on identified instructional needs $r(120) = .52$, $p < .001$; and the capacity to use school or district data to measure school progress $r(122) = .51$, $p < .001$. There was a strong correlation between the practice of supporting differentiated instruction to enhance student learning and the practice of supporting professional development activities $r(120) = .52$, $p < .001$.

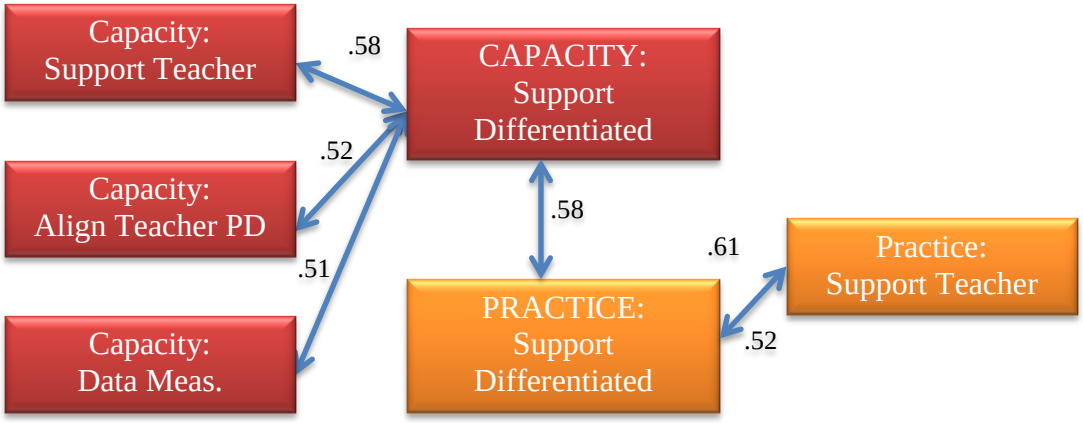

Figure 6: Correlations for Supporting Differentiated Instruction

Finding 3.13. The data indicated that there was a moderate correlation between capacity and practice in the ability to support professional development activities for teachers $r(120) = .42$, $p < .001$. There was a strong correlation between the capacity to support professional development activities for teachers and the capacity to align professional development based on identified instructional needs $r(121) = .72$, $p < .001$. There was a significant correlation between the practice of supporting professional development activities for teachers and the practice of aligning professional development activities based on identified instructional needs $r(121) = .70$, $p < .001$.

Finding 3.14. The data indicated that there was a moderate correlation between capacity and practice in the ability to align professional development activities for teachers based on identified instructional needs $r(117) = .45$, $p < .001$. There was a strong correlation between the capacity to align professional development activities for teachers based on identified instructional needs and the capacity to create a coherent educational

program $r(121) = .51$, $p < .001$; and the capacity to evaluate curriculum for its use and effectiveness $r(121) = .56$, $p < .001$.

Finding 3.15. The data indicated that there was a moderate correlation between capacity and practice in the ability to create a coherent educational program across the school $r(116) = .46$, $p < .001$. There was a strong correlation between the capacity to create a coherent educational program across the school and the capacity to promote a curriculum that supports college and career readiness $r(124) = .52$, $p < .001$; and the capacity to evaluate curriculum for its used and effectivness $r(124) = .57$, $p < .001$. There was a strong correlation between the practice of creating a coherent educational program across the school and the practice of promoting a curriculum that support college and career readiness $r(118) = .69$, $p < .001$; and the practice of evaluating curriculum for its use and effectiveness $r(116) = .58$, $p < .001$.

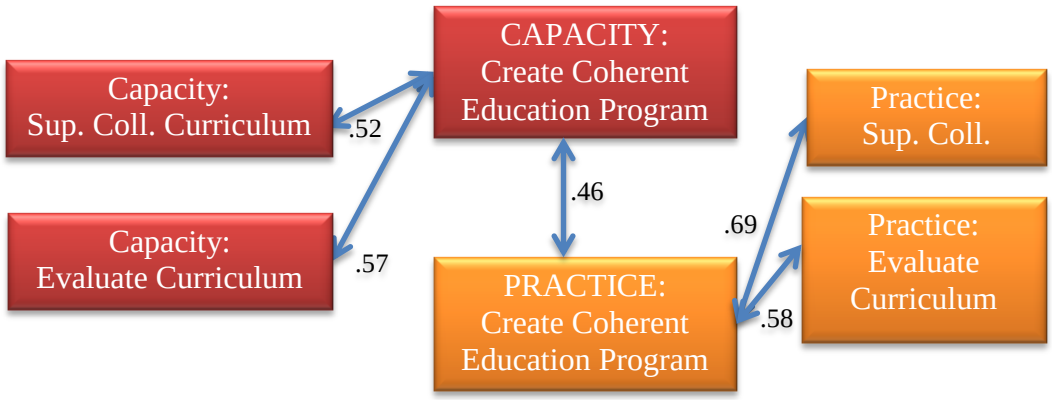

Figure 7: Correlations for Creating a Coherent Educational Program

Finding 3.16. The data indicated that there was a strong correlation between capacity and practice in the ability to promote a curriculum that supports college and career readiness $r(121) = .55$, $p < .001$. There was a strong correlation between the

practice of promoting a curriculum that supports college and career readiness and the practice of evaluating curriculum for its use and effectiveness $r(119) = .52$, $p < .001$.

Finding 3.17. The data indicated that there was a moderate correlation between capacity and practice in the ability to evaluate curriculum for its use and effectiveness $r(118) = .47$, $p < .001$. There was a strong correlation between the capacity to evaluate curriculum for its use and effectiveness and the capacity to redesign the school's organization to enhance teaching and learning $r(123) = .51$, $p < .001$. There was a strong correlation between the practice of evaluating curriculum for its use and effectiveness and redesigning the school's organization to enhance teaching and learning $r(118) = .62$, $p < .001$.

Finding 3.18. The data indicated that there was a strong correlation between capacity and practice in the ability to redesign the school's organization to enhance teaching and learning $r(117) = .55$, $p < .001$.

Finding 3.19. The data indicated that there was a moderate correlation between capacity and practice in the ability to establish high expectations for student learning $r(119) = .42$, $p < .001$.

Finding 3.2. The data indicated that there was a moderate correlation between capacity and practice in the ability to use school or district data to measure school progress $r(121) = .48$, $p < .001$.

Finding 3.21. The data indicated that there was a moderate correlation between capacity and practice in the ability to manage school resources effectively and efficiently $r(121) = .44$, $p < .001$.

Finding 3.22. The data indicated that there was a moderate correlation between capacity and practice in the ability to manage discipline effectively $r(120) = .42$, $p < .001$. There was a strong correlation between the capacity to manage discipline effectively and the capacity to manage facilities and their maintenance to promote a safe and orderly learning enviroment $r(124) = .57$, $p < .001$.

Finding 3.23. The data indicated that there was a strong correlation between capacity and practice in the ability to manage facilities and their maintenance to promote a safe and orderly learning environment $r(121) = .53$, $p < .001$. There was a strong correlation between the capacity to manage facilities and their maintenance and the capcity to recruit, hire, and retain high quality personnel $r(124) = .51$, $p < .001$.

Finding 3.24. The data indicated that there was a weak correlation between capacity and practice in the ability to recruit, hire, and retain high quality personnel $r(119) = .30$, $p < .001$.

Finding 3.25. The data indicated that there was a weak correlation between capacity and practice in the ability to build and sustain positive relationships with families and caregivers $r(120) = .28$, $p < .002$. There was a strong correlation between the capacity to build and sustain positive relationships with families and the capacity to communciate effectively with families and cargivers $r(123) = .80$, $p < .001$. There was a strong correlation with the practice of building and sustaining positive relationships with families and the practice of communicating effectively with families and caregivers $r(12) = .82$, $p < .001$.

Finding 3.26. The data indicated that there was a moderate correlation between capacity and practice in the ability to communicate effectively with families and caregivers $r(121) = .35$, $p < .001$. There was a strong correlation between the capacity to communicate effectively with families and caregivers and the capacity to build and sustain positive relationships with community partners $r(123) = .66$, $p < .001$; and the capacity to communicate effecitvely with community partners $r(123) = .60$, $p < .001$.

Finding 3.27. The data indicated that there was a moderate correlation between capacity and practice in the ability to build and sustain positive relationships with community partners $r(120) = .47$, $p < .001$. There was a strong correlation between the capacity to build and sustain positive relationships with community partners and the capacity to communicate effectively with community partners $r(122) = .84$, $p < .001$. There was a strong correlation between the practice of building and sustaining positive relationships with community partners and the practice of communicating effectively with community partners $r(119) = .87$, $p < .001$.

Finding 3.28. The data indicated that there was a moderate correlation between capacity and practice in the ability to communicate effectively with community partners $r(117) = .44$, $p < .001$.

The data related to research question three indicates that there are no strong relationships between the domains of capacity and practice of assistant principals. There were five strong correlations between the 28 competencies of efficacy and practice. These data indicate that assistant principals' practice is not strongly correlated to their

self-reported efficacy in each of the areas. The data further indicates that there are stronger correlations within groupings of practices and within groupings of capacities.

The lack of strong correlations between capacity and practice means that assistant principals are not engaging in leadership based on their perceived areas of strength in many of the competencies. Therefore higher capacity in building and sustaining an educational vision does not result in higher levels of engagement in practice or vice versa. Although assistant principals spend greater amounts of time building and sustaining relationships with families and caregivers, it does not mean that they feel high levels of efficacy in this competency.

The competencies that were strongly related include the facilitation of shared leadership, working with teachers to change content and instructional methods, supporting differentiated instruction, promoting a curriculum that support college and career readiness, and redesigning the school's organization to enhance teaching and learning. This indicates that assistant principals with higher levels of capacity also engaged in higher levels of practice in these competencies. When lower levels of self-efficacy in these competencies are found, mentors should intervene to increase capacity and practice.

Instructional leadership is the domain with the strongest correlation which further indicates the relationship between capacity and practice in this domain. There were also strong correlations within the practice competencies of instructional leadership. An assistant principal who spent more time supporting differentiated instruction also spent more time supporting professional development. Additionally, assistant principals who

spent more time differentiating instruction also spent more time providing constructive feedback to teachers to improve instruction.

For the domain of instructional leadership, it suggests that if a leader is not engaging that it is related to his or her self-efficacy in that area. Conversely, if a leader has a low level of efficacy in instructional leadership, they are less likely to engage in the competencies of instructional leadership. Because instructional leadership is not correlated to management and building family and community relations, it indicates that assistant principals engaging in higher levels of instructional leadership are not necessarily engaging in higher levels of management. This suggests that mentors need to ensure that assistant principals who have higher levels of engagement also have sufficient engagement in management and building sustainable relationships with families and caregivers. There were fourteen moderate correlations and nine weak correlations between the competencies of school improvement and instructional leadership. This suggests that mentors should work to strengthen the relationship between instructional leadership and school improvement competencies.

Findings for Research Question Four. What differences exist among assistant principal capacity and practice based on experience, setting and personal characteristics?

In order the test the effect of administrative experience on assistant principal capacity and practice, an independent sample ANOVA was conducted based on experience. There were no significant differences by domain based on administrative experience.

In order to test the effect of assistant principal minority identification on capacity and practice, an independent samples *t*-test was conducted. The data in Table 22 depicts the data from the capacity and practice of assistant principals in each of the five school leadership domains. Minority assistant principals reported higher capacity in family community relations than did White assistant principals. Minority assistant principals (*M* = 3.22, *SD* = .910) reported greater frequency in the practice of building and sustaining an educational vision for the school than did White assistant principals (*M* = 2.66, *SD* = 1.070). Minority assistant principals reported a higher capacity for managing discipline (*M* = 4.37, *SD* = .742; *M* = 4.03, *SD* = .833), and managing facilities (*M* = 3.16, *SD* = .987; *M* = 2.70, *SD* =1.244) as well as more frequent practice managing facilities (*M* = 3.16, *SD* = .987; *M* = 2.70, *SD* =1.244).

Table 22

School Leadership Domain By Minority Status

	White			Minority			t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD			
OSC CAP	72	4.18	0.44	52	4.23	0.42	-0.59	122	0.55
OSC PRCT	69	3.16	0.51	46	3.26	0.52	-1.03	113	0.31
IL CAP	71	2.58	0.62	49	2.66	0.67	-0.68	118	0.50
IL PRCT	73	4.10	0.59	48	4.08	0.70	0.17	119	0.87
SI CAP	73	3.91	0.57	51	4.06	0.55	-1.50	122	0.14
SI PRCT	67	2.63	0.64	48	2.78	0.77	-1.17	113	0.24
MAN CAP	73	4.04	0.61	52	4.25	0.62	-1.88	123	0.06
MAN PRCT	71	2.95	0.68	50	3.14	0.55	-1.56	119	0.12
FCR CAP	72	4.12	0.66	50	4.44	0.61	-2.72	120	0.01
FCR PRCT	70	2.93	0.66	49	3.06	0.73	-1.01	117	0.32

In order the test the effect of gender on assistant principal capacity and practice, independent sample *t*-tests were conducted by domain and competency. There were no significant differences by domain based on gender. Male assistant principals (*M* = 3.07, *SD* = .712) did engage in the practice of providing constructive feedback for teachers to improve instruction more often than did female assistant principals (*M* = 2.76, *SD* = .820). There were no other significant differences by competency based on gender.

In order the test the effect of principal preparation programs on assistant principal capacity and practice, an independent sample ANOVA was conducted based on experience. There were no significant differences by domain or competency based on principal preparation program.

In order to test the effect of beliefs about the principalship on assistant principal capacity and practice, independent samples *t*-tests were conducted. The data in Table 23 depicts the results about the capacity and practice of assistant principals in each of the five school leadership domains based on agreement with the idea that the principalship can make a difference in the lives of staff and students. Those who strongly agree that the principalship can make a difference in the lives of students and staff also reported a significantly higher capacity for the domains of school improvement and management. This group reported higher frequency in the practice of school improvement efforts and management. The strongly agree group reported a higher capacity for promoting effectiveness in serving all students well (*M* = 4.20, *SD* = .551; *M* = 3.80, *SD* =.676) as well as more frequent practice (*M* = 3.66, *SD* = .581; *M* = 2.92, *SD* =1.038). The strongly

agree group more frequently practiced supporting differentiated instruction to support student learning (M = 2.80, SD = .863; M = 2.21, SD = .699).

Table 23

Principalship Attitudes: Can Make a Difference in the Lives of Students and Staff

	Strongly Agree			Agree					
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
OSC CAP	109	4.24	0.41	13	4.01	0.391	-1.88	120	0.06
OSC PRCT	103	3.23	0.53	11	3.01	0.349	-1.31	112	0.19
IL CAP	107	4.12	0.62	12	3.88	0.741	-1.21	117	0.23
IL PRCT	107	2.64	0.65	12	2.38	0.471	-1.32	118	0.19
SI CAP	109	4.03	0.53	13	3.67	0.553	-2.32	120	0.02
SI PRCT	103	2.74	0.70	11	2.21	0.511	-2.45	112	0.02
MAN CAP	110	4.19	0.58	13	3.85	0.673	-1.98	121	0.05
MAN PRCT	108	3.06	0.63	12	2.65	0.569	-2.18	118	0.03
FCR CAP	107	4.29	0.64	13	4.04	0.652	-1.34	118	0.18
FCR PRCT	107	3.01	0.69	11	2.82	0.672	-.864	116	0.39

The data in Table 24 depicts the results about the capacity and practice of assistant principals in each of the five school leadership domains based on their agreement with the idea that the principalship provides opportunities for professional growth. Those who strongly agree that the principalship provides opportunities for their own professional growth reported significantly higher capacity and more frequent practice for all domains of school leadership with the expectation of management.

Table 24

Principalship Attitudes: The Principalship Provide Opportunities for Professional Growth

	Strongly Agree			Agree					
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
OSC CAP	84	4.275	0.417	36	4.08	0.39	-2.39	118	0.02
OSC PRCT	80	3.251	0.510	32	3.08	0.51	-1.64	110	0.10
IL CAP	84	4.171	0.619	33	3.93	0.63	-1.91	115	0.06
IL PRCT	83	2.699	0.670	34	2.44	0.53	-1.95	115	0.05
SI CAP	83	4.096	0.535	37	3.77	0.49	-3.12	118	0.001
SI PRCT	78	2.836	0.670	34	2.34	0.69	-3.30	110	0.001
MAN CAP	84	4.208	0.567	37	4.06	0.61	-1.29	119	0.20
MAN PRCT	82	3.049	0.646	36	2.96	0.64	-0.65	116	0.52
FCR CAP	82	4.363	0.628	46	4.08	0.64	-2.22	116	0.03
FCR PRCT	81	3.074	0.700	35	2.84	0.62	-1.69	114	0.09

The data in Table 25 depicts the results about the capacity and practice of assistant principals in each of the five school leadership domains based on their agreement with the idea that the principalship enables influence on school change. Those who strongly agree that the principalship enables them to influence school change reported significantly higher capacity and more frequent practice for the domain of school improvement. They also reported higher capacity for organizational school culture and greater frequency of practice in the domain of management. The strongly agree group reported higher capacity for the ability to align professional development based on identified instructional needs (M = 4.04, SD = .820; M = 3.65, SD = .936 respectively) as well as greater frequency in engaging in supporting differentiated instruction to enhance student learning (M = 2.81, SD = .858; M = 2.42, SD = .830 respectively). There were

not significant differences in the domains of family community relations, the practice of organizational school culture, or the capacity for management.

Table 25

Principalship Attitudes: The Principalship Enables Influence on School Change

	Strongly Agree			Agree					
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
OSC CAP	96	4.25	0.43	25	4.05	0.34	-2.14	119	0.03
OSC PRCT	91	3.20	0.54	22	3.22	0.43	0.11	111	0.92
IL CAP	96	4.14	0.63	22	3.86	0.62	-1.87	116	0.06
IL PRCT	96	2.66	0.65	22	2.41	0.61	-1.69	116	0.09
SI CAP	97	4.06	0.54	24	3.73	0.48	-2.70	119	0.01
SI PRCT	90	2.78	0.69	23	2.38	0.65	-2.49	111	0.01
MAN CAP	98	4.20	0.57	24	3.97	0.68	-1.69	120	0.09
MAN PRCT	95	3.10	0.59	24	2.73	0.75	-2.63	117	0.01
FCR CAP	97	4.26	0.65	22	4.28	0.65	0.14	117	0.89
FCR PRCT	94	2.97	0.70	23	3.12	0.60	0.93	115	0.36

The data in Table 26 depict the results about the capacity and practice of assistant principals in each of the five school leadership domains based on agreement with the belief that the principalship has too many responsibilities. Those who strongly disagree and disagree that the principalship has too many responsibilities reported higher capacity for instructional leadership and school improvement. The strongly disagree/disagree group reported significantly greater frequency in the practices of encouraging staff members initiative and innovative efforts (M = 3.50, SD = .598; M = 3.07, SD = .843 respectively), supporting professional development activities for teachers (M = 2.78, SD = .736; M = 2.33, SD = .742 respectively). Conversely, they spent less time building and

sustaining positive relationships with families and caregivers (*M* = 3.04 *SD* = 1.605; *M* = 3.51, *SD* = .727 respectively), and communicating effectively with families (*M* = 3.04, *SD* = .878; *M* = 3.42, *SD* = .772 respectively).

Table 26

Principalship Attitudes: Too Many Responsibilities In The Principalship

	SA/A			SD/D			t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD			
OSC CAP	81	4.18	0.43	23	4.30	0.38	1.223	102	0.224
OSC PRCT	76	3.15	0.55	22	3.27	0.40	0.945	96	0.347
IL CAP	80	4.04	0.62	23	2.79	0.65	2.15	99	0.034
IL PRCT	78	2.53	0.65	21	4.36	0.59	1.69	99	0.094
SI CAP	82	3.90	0.55	22	4.30	0.53	3.012	102	0.003
SI PRCT	77	2.64	0.72	23	2.83	0.71	1.149	98	0.254
MAN CAP	83	4.10	0.56	22	4.28	0.70	1.298	103	0.197
MAN PRCT	80	2.99	0.63	23	2.95	0.74	-0.29	101	0.772
FCR CAP	81	4.24	0.64	22	4.42	0.56	1.213	101	0.228
FCR PRCT	79	3.01	0.67	22	2.78	0.83	-1.321	99	0.190

Note. SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree

The data in Table 27 depicts the results about the capacity and practice of assistant principals in each of the five school leadership domains based on agreement with the belief that the principalship decreases opportunities to work directly with children. Those who strongly disagree and disagree that the principalship decreases their opportunities to work directly with children reported statistically higher frequency of practice for the domains of organizational school culture and family community relations over the group of those who strongly agree and agree. The strongly disagree and disagree group reported higher engagement in the organizational school culture practices of

encouraging staff members' initiative and innovative efforts (*M* = 3.37, *SD* = .631; *M* = 3.04, *SD* = .922 respectively), engaging staff in comprehensive planning for school improvement (*M* = 2.83, *SD* = .857; *M* = 2.46, *SD* = .808 respectively) and, facilitating shared leadership (*M* = 3.40, *SD* = .869; *M* = 2.95, *SD* = .923 respectively). The strongly disagree and disagree group reported higher engagement in the school improvement practices of promoting a curriculum that supports college and career readiness (*M* = 2.96, *SD* = 1.066; *M* = 2.51, *SD* = 1.120 respectively), evaluating curriculum for its use and effectiveness (*M* = 2.35, *SD* = .890; *M* = 1.98, *SD* = .909 respectively) and the family community relationship practices of building and sustaining positive relationships with community partners (*M* = 2.81, *SD* = .971; *M* = 2.40, *SD* = .873 respectively) and , communicating effectively with community partners (*M* = 2.73, *SD* = .995; *M* = 2.33, *SD* = .771 respectively). The strongly disagree/disagree group also reported higher capacity to evaluate curriculum for its use and effectiveness (*M* = 3.76, *SD* = .823; *M* = 3.39, *SD* = 1.013 respectively).

Table 27

Principalship Attitudes: Decreases Opportunities to Work Directly With Children

	SA/A			SD/D			t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD			
OSC CAP	55	4.13	0.42	53	4.29	0.41	2.001	106	0.048
OSC PRCT	50	3.10	0.56	50	3.32	0.45	2.206	98	0.03
IL CAP	52	2.53	0.62	52	2.64	0.68	0.847	102	0.399
IL PRCT	54	4.12	0.66	52	4.06	0.62	-0.489	104	0.626
SI CAP	57	3.94	0.55	53	4.06	0.56	1.081	108	0.282
SI PRCT	51	2.56	0.68	48	2.83	0.76	1.925	97	0.057
MAN CAP	57	4.14	0.60	53	4.20	0.56	0.562	108	0.575
MAN PRCT	55	2.98	0.60	50	3.11	0.65	1.009	103	0.316
FCR CAP	55	4.24	0.67	52	4.33	0.62	0.726	105	0.47
FCR PRCT	55	2.84	0.65	48	3.13	0.72	2.105	101	0.038

Note. SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree

The data in Table 28 depicts the results about the capacity and practice of assistant principals in each of the five school leadership domains based on agreement with the belief that the principalship creates too much stress. There were no significant differences between the strongly disagree/disagree group and the strongly agree/agree group for capacity or practice composite domains based on the belief that the principalship creates too much stress. The strongly disagree/disagree group reported higher engagement in the practice of encouraging staff members' initiative and innovative efforts (M = 3.38, SD = .637; M = 3.00, SD = .907 respectively).

Table 28

Principalship Attitudes: Creates Too Much Stress

	SA/A			SD/D			t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD			
OSC CAP	53	4.16	0.42	40	4.25	0.46	1.036	91	0.30
OSC PRCT	49	3.12	0.57	37	3.25	0.50	1.133	84	0.26
IL CAP	52	2.48	0.57	38	2.65	0.70	1.243	88	0.22
IL PRCT	52	4.10	0.67	39	4.03	0.67	-0.554	89	0.58
SI CAP	53	3.95	0.52	40	3.95	0.66	0.028	91	0.98
SI PRCT	51	2.59	0.65	35	2.71	0.72	0.868	84	0.39
MAN CAP	54	4.13	0.56	40	4.14	0.72	0.092	70.95	0.93
MAN PRCT	52	3.02	0.62	38	2.98	0.70	-0.279	88	0.78
FCR CAP	54	4.27	0.60	39	4.30	0.70	0.208	91	0.84
FCR PRCT	52	2.96	0.66	36	2.95	0.79	-0.034	86	0.97

Note. SA = Strongly agree; A = Agree; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree

In order the test the effect of minority enrollment on assistant principal capacity and practice, an independent sample ANOVA was conducted based on minority enrollment level. The omnibus test for practice of family and community relations was statistically significant, $F(3, 116) = 2.712$, $p = .048$, $\eta^2 = .066$. Planned contrasts revealed that assistant principals serving in schools with 10-25% ($M = 2.55$, $SD = .27$) and 76-100% ($M = 2.91$, $SD = .68$) spent significantly less time engaging in the practice of family community relations than did the groups with 26-50% ($M = 3.25$, $SD = .83$) and 51-75% ($M = 3.26$, $SD = .61$). There were no other significant differences by domain based on minority enrollment.

In order to test the effect of free and reduced lunch eligibility enrollment on assistant principal capacity and practice, an independent sample ANOVA was conducted

based on free/reduced lunch eligibility level. The omnibus test for practice of family and community relations was statistically significant, $F(3, 115) = 3.015$, $p = .033$, $\eta^2 = .073$. Planned contrasts revealed that assistant principals serving in schools with free and reduce lunch eligibility rates of 10-25% ($M = 2.63$, $SD = .31$) and 76-100% ($M = 2.90$, $SD = .68$) spent significantly less time engaging in the practice of family community relations than did the groups with 26-50% ($M = 3.19$, $SD = .88$) and 51-75% ($M = 3.31$, $SD = .59$). There were no other significant differences by domain based on free/reduced lunch eligibility level.

In order the test the effect of English language learner enrollment on assistant principal capacity and practice, an independent sample ANOVA was conducted based on English language learner enrollment. There were no significant differences by domain or competency based on English language learner enrollment.

In order the test the effect of language arts proficiency on assistant principal capacity and practice, an independent sample ANOVA was conducted based on language arts proficiency level. The omnibus test for the capacity for organizational school culture based on language arts proficiency was statistically significant, $F(3, 119) = 2.840$, $p = .041$, $\eta^2 = .002$. Planned contrasts revealed that assistant principals serving in schools where 76-100% ($M = 4.02$, $SD = .44$) were proficient in language arts reported significantly less capacity in the domain of organizational school culture than did the group with 51-75% ($M = 4.38$, $SD = .38$) proficient. There were no other significant differences by domain or competency based on language arts proficiency level.

In order the test the effect of mathematics proficiency on assistant principal capacity and practice, an independent sample ANOVA was conducted based on mathematics level. The omnibus test for the practice of management based on mathematics proficiency was statistically significant, $F(3, 115) = 2.943$, $p = .036$, $\eta^2 = .009$. Planned contrasts revealed that assistant principals serving in schools where 76-100% ($M = 2.50$, $SD = .58$) were proficient in mathematics reported significantly less time engaged in the practice of management than did the groups with 10-25% ($M = 2.99$, $SD = .68$), 26-50% ($M = 3.19$, $SD = .59$), and 51-75% ($M = 2.97$, $SD = .57$). There were no other significant differences by domain or competency based on mathematics proficiency level.

In order to test the effect of job type on assistant principal capacity and practice, an independent sample ANOVA was conducted based on the job types of traditional assistant principal, principal resident, administrative intern, and administrative assistant. Statistically significant differences were found by job type in the practice competencies of building a collaborative environment, working with teachers to solve school or department problems, and aligning professional development based on identified instructional needs. The omnibus test for building a collaborative environment was statistically significant, $F(3, 120) = 2.766$, $p = .045$, $\eta^2 = .065$. Post hoc analyses using the Scheffé post hoc criterion for significance indicated that principal residents spent significantly less time ($M = 2.91$, $SD = .83$) in building a collaborative environment than traditional assistant principals ($M = 3.53$, $SD = .62$). There was not a significant difference in the amount of time between principal residents and administrative interns

(*M* = 3.44, *SD* = .73) or administrative assistants (*M* = 3.46, *SD* = .68). The omnibus test for working with teachers to solve school or department problems was statistically significant, $F(3, 121) = 4.120$, $p = .008$, $\eta^2 = .093$. Post hoc analyses using the Scheffé post hoc criterion for significance indicated that principal residents spent significantly less time (*M* = 2.64, *SD* = .81) in working with teachers to solve school or department problems than traditional assistant principals (*M* = 3.41, *SD* = .82). There was not a significant difference in the amount of time between principal residents or traditional assistant principals and administrative interns (*M* = 2.78, *SD* = .83) or administrative assistants (*M* = 3.16, *SD* = .85). The omnibus test for aligning professional development based on identified instructional needs was statistically significant, $F(3, 119) = 3.246$, $p = .024$, $\eta^2 = .076$. Post hoc analyses using the Games-Howell post hoc criterion for significance indicated that administrative assistants spent significantly less time (*M* = 1.92, *SD* = .69) aligning professional development than traditional assistant principals (*M* = 2.38, *SD* = .81). There was not a significant difference in the amount of time between administrative or traditional assistant principals and administrative interns (*M* = 1.71, *SD* = .76) or principal residents (*M* = 2.36, *SD* = 1.03).

Significant differences were found by job type in the capacity to manage school resources, recruit, hire and retain high quality personnel and to manage discipline effectively. Planned contrasts revealed that traditional assistant principals reported a significantly higher capacity to manage school resources than the combined group of principal residents, administrative interns and administrative assistants $F(3, 122) = 2.705$, $p = .048$, $\eta^2 = .062$. The omnibus test for the capacity to recruit, hire and retain high quality

personnel was statistically significant, $F(3, 122) = 5.504$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .119$. Post hoc analyses using the Scheffé post hoc criterion for significance indicated that traditional assistant principals ($M = 4.42$, $SD = .57$) reported having significantly higher capacity to recruit, hire and retain high quality personnel than administrative interns ($M = 3.56$, $SD = .88$) There was no significant difference in the report of capacity between traditional assistant principals or administrative interns and principal residents ($M = 3.91$, $SD = .70$) or administrative assistants ($M = 4.20$, $SD = .96$). The omnibus test for the capacity to manage discipline effectively was statistically significant, $F(3, 122) = 5.413$, $p < .002$, $\eta^2 = .117$. Post hoc analyses using the Scheffé post hoc criterion for significance indicated that principal residents ($M = 3.36$, $SD = 1.03$) reported significantly less capacity to manage discipline than traditional assistant principals ($M = 4.26$, $SD = .74$) and administrative assistants ($M = 4.32$, $SD = .69$) but not administrative interns ($M = 3.70$, $SD = .97$).

In order to test the effect of school professional culture level on assistant principal capacity and practice, an independent sample ANOVA was conducted. The indicator of professional culture was based on the composite mean score for the indicators of teacher collaboration, shared problem-solving, and collective professional efficacy. The omnibus test for the domain of capacity was statistically significant, $F(2, 119) = 13.76$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2 = .118$. Post-hoc Scheffé tests revealed that the high group ($M = 4.84$, $SD = .40$) reported higher levels of organizational school culture capacity than the medium ($M = 4.18$, $SD = .38$) or low group ($M = 3.85$, $SD = .41$). The omnibus test for the domain of practice was statistically significant, $F(2, 119) = 13.76$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2 = .118$. Post-hoc

Scheffé tests revealed that the high group (M = 4.84, SD = .40) reported higher levels of organizational school culture capacity than the medium (M = 4.18, SD = .38) or low group (M = 3.85, SD = .41).

The high group reported higher capacity in 13 competencies and more frequent practice in six competencies. When differences were found, those reporting the highest levels of engagement also reported significantly higher levels of capacity and practice than did the medium-level group or the low-level group in the competencies of family and community engagement. Higher levels of student and family engagement were also related to greater capacity in the competencies to promote a college and career readiness curriculum, facilitate shared leadership, foster staff sensitivity to student diversity, build a collaborative environment, engage staff in comprehensive planning for school improvement, and manage school resources effectively and efficiently. Higher levels were related to higher engagement in the practice of fostering staff sensitivity to student diversity, and the alignment of professional development based on identified student needs.

Significant differences were found for assistant principal capacity and practice based on indicators of professional culture. When differences were found, those reporting the highest levels of professional culture also reported significantly higher levels of capacity and practice than did the mid-level group or the low-level group. The high professional practice group reported a significantly higher level of capacity in all competencies with the expectation of organizational school culture. The high group more frequently used clear ethical principles to guide decision-making and problem solving

and encouraged staff members' initiative and innovative efforts more frequently than the mid or low groups. The high group engaged in instructional leadership practices at a greater frequency than did the other groups. The high group spent more time changing content and instructional methods when students were not doing well (M = 2.94, SD = 0.854; M = 2.57, SD = 0.724; m 3.04, SD = 0.841 respectively), supporting differentiated instruction, supporting professional development activities for teachers and aligning professional development based on identified student needs. The high professional culture group reported higher capacity for the school improvement competencies of creating a coherent educational program, promoting a college and career readiness curriculum, and establishing high expectations. The high group reported higher capacity to manage discipline effectively and recruit, hire and maintain high quality personnel.

The data from research question four indicate that very few differences exist in the leadership capacity and practice domains based on experience, setting or personal characteristics. This suggests that looking at experience as a determinant of the future practice of assistant principal will not prove to determine levels of engagement in specific leadership competencies. Although some differences were found based on setting, they were not consistent at the domain or competency level and suggest that it is not globally determinant of capacity or practice. Therefore these data suggest that there was not a set of experiences or a setting that will consistently lead to higher levels of capacity or practice among assistant principals.

The major differences for leadership capacity and practice are based on assistant principals' attitudes about the principalship. Those who strongly agree with the positively

worded attitudes towards the principalship also consistently reported higher levels of capacity and practice in the domains of leadership. Because differences were found more globally by attitudes, this is an area that should be investigated in determining future engagement in the domains of leadership.

Summary

This study collected data that described the perceptions of assistant principals regarding their practice and capacity relative to the expectations of their preparation and the role of the principal. It also investigated the correlations and differences in capacity and practice based on experience, setting, and personal characteristics. The instrument used to assess the leadership of assistant principals was a modified version of the UCEA INSPIRE Leader in Practice instrument. Cronbach's alpha indicated that all reliability coefficients were in the acceptable range with the exception of the management practice domain.

Based on frequency of practice, assistant principals engaged in the domain of instructional leadership the least - slightly more than once per week. Concerning the responses about leadership capacity, mean responses for the leadership domains range from a high of 4.25 for family and community relations and to a low of 3.96 for school improvement. Assistant principals reported that they agree that they have capacity to facilitate the five domains of school leadership 85.5% of the time.

A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to examine whether a relationship exists between domains of leadership capacity and practice. The results indicated that moderate relationships exist between each of the leadership capacity

and practice domains. The strongest correlation was in the area of instructional leadership $r(120) = .46$, $p < .001$ and the weakest correlation was in the area of family community relations $r(119) = .35$, $p < .001$. The strongest sets of correlations were based on categories of practice competencies and categories of capacity competencies.

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and independent samples *t*-tests were conducted to determine the differences in leadership capacity and practice domains based on experience, setting or personal characteristics. The data indicates that differences are most prevalent based on the assistant principal beliefs about the principalship.

Chapter Five: Summary, Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

This chapter presents a discussion of the findings. Limitations of the study are also presented followed by recommendations for policy, practice and further research on the topic of assistant principal leadership. Finally, this chapter closes with a discussion of the implications for the leadership capacity and practice of assistant principals.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the leadership capacities and practices of assistant principals and to identify strengths and gaps in practice. The purpose was also to determine what relationships existed between capacity and practice and to see if there was a difference based on context and personal characteristics. The focus on the role of the assistant principal addressed the lack of research in a critical area of leadership capacity in schools. It also addressed succession management in school systems by investigating the current state of the presence of the leadership function for the assistant principal.

Research Questions

1. To what extent are assistant principals engaging in the school leadership domains of facilitating organizational school culture, instructional leadership, school improvement, management, and family and community relations?
2. To what extent do assistant principals report self-efficacy in facilitating the

school leadership domains of organizational school culture, instructional leadership, school improvement, management, and family and community relations?

3. How do assistant principals' self-reports of efficacy correlate to the extent of practice of school leadership?

4. What differences exist among assistant principal capacity and practice based on experience, setting and personal characteristics?

Discussion of the Results

This study contributes to an area that has been underrepresented in the literature on school leadership (Walker & Kwan, 2011). Although the role of assistant principal is very important to the organization of this school, it is often poorly defined, ignored and/or maligned (Matthews, 2003; Bloom and Krovetz, 2001; Melton, Mallory, Mays, & Chance, 2011). It draws attention to the need to investigate the relationship between capacity and practice and its effect on schools and the principal pipeline.

Discussion for Research Question One. To what extent are assistant principals engaging in the school leadership domains of facilitating organizational school culture, instructional leadership, school improvement, management, and family and community relations?

In the investigation of leadership behavior practice, it was found that assistant principals most frequently engaged in the practice of the domain of organizational school culture as compared to engagement in the remaining four domains. The result on the

competency of student discipline confirms earlier research that assistant principals spend an excessive amount of time in the management of student discipline (Austin & Brown, 1970; Bates & Shank, 1983; Cantwell, 1993). It also confirms the findings of Sun (2011) who found that student discipline is the most frequent activity of assistant principals. It is interesting to note that the assistant principals in this study reported that they spent significantly less time engaging in building positive relationships with families and caregivers than in student discipline $t(119) = 4.03$, $p < .001$. Furthermore, communicating with families and caregivers does not occur as frequently as the management of student discipline $t(119) = 3.01$, $p < .003$. This could indicate a missed opportunity to use disciplinary events as an occasion to increase family engagement with the school. Prior research has found that implementing family and community activities decreased the number of students involved in discipline (Luicellie, Putnam, Handler & Feinberg, 2003; Sheldon & Epstein, 2002; Jeynes, 2012).

Conversely, assistant principals spent the least amount of time in decision-making and/or strategic leadership work such as engaging in the practice of recruiting, hiring, and retaining high quality personnel. It is also important to note that 10.16% of the group reported never engaging in personnel recruitment.

Whereas discipline was widely distributed, recruitment was less so. This gap in practice aligns with the gap in engaging in supporting professional development activities for teachers and aligning professional development for teachers based on identified student needs. The data indicate that 56.45% of assistant principals support professional development twice a month or less and 67.48% align professional development activities

twice a month or less. Given the connection between professional development and teacher retention (Ladd, 2009; Boyd et al., 2011; Margolis & Deuel, 2009), it is alarming that 15.63% of the respondents never engage in the alignment of professional development activities.

Another major gap in the practice of assistant principals is the area of school improvement. More than 15% of assistant principals never engage in four out of the six school improvement competencies. It is a disconnect that assistant principals reported the highest engagement in promoting the effectiveness in serving all students well, yet the evaluation of curriculum for effectiveness is the competency where they collectively spend the least amount of time and where the most respondents report never engaging in the practice. The literature suggests that there is a connection between the evaluation of curriculum and the ability to relate the educational process to individual learners (Glatthorn, Boschee, & Whitehead, 2009). Additionally, there are gaps in the practices of creating a coherent educational program across the school, promoting a college and career readiness curriculum and redesigning the school's organization to enhance teaching and learning. The lack of engagement in these three competencies indicates that there is a missed opportunity of leveraging the work of assistant principals to support the college and career readiness of students. Of the students served by the group of respondents in this study, 77.2% are eligible for free and reduced lunch and 77.6% of students are minority. Research suggests that schools serving low-income and minority communities are less likely to offer upper level and college preparatory courses (Wimberly & Noeth, 2005). The gap in the number of assistant principals addressing

college and career readiness also serves to reinforce the advantage of the "shadow education" enjoyed by students who are already privileged (Buchmann, Condron, & Roscigno, 2010).

The fact that there are large numbers of respondents that report never engaging in several areas of leadership practice, suggests that these are areas of leadership that are not distributed to assistant principals at the same level as other areas. Previous research has concluded that assistant principals did not engage in these areas because principals maintained control and have not promoted a system of shared leadership (Hausman, et a., 2002; Pounder & Crow, 2005). As previously stated, when distributed leadership is found in improving schools, it is associated with purposeful distribution (Day, Gronn, & Sala, 2004). The role of the assistant principal and the distribution of work was not perceived to cut across all of the domains of school leadership.

In light of succession management, the current findings suggest that there are domains and competencies where assistant principals lack constant practice. Research has demonstrated that when assistant principals are assigned duties, it is done so without much thought to the idea of succession management (Hess & Kelly, 2007; Kelly, 1987; Kwan, 2009; Mullen & Cairns, 2001). Without the necessary practice in the areas of school improvement and instructional leadership there will also be significant gaps in readiness to assume the principalship. This is consistent with the findings of Gregg (2007) and Chan, Webb, & Bowen (2003) that assert that the role of assistant principal does not adequately prepare one for the principalship. Although research and media have placed culpability on principal preparation programs (Clifford, Behrstock-Sherratt, &

Fetters, 2012; Darling-Hammond, et al., 2007; Levine, 2005; Myung, Loeb, & Horng, 2011; Zepeda, Bengtson, & Parylo, 2012) there is evidence that the work life and roles of assistant principals do not mitigate the phenomenon, but rather reinforce the gaps.

The data from research question one provides insight into the distribution of leadership activities among assistant principals and the missed opportunity of integrating and distributing leadership throughout all the domains of leadership. The concentration of time that assistant principals spent in the organizational school culture and management domains (more than twice per week) limits them from having a greater impact on student success. High levels of engagement in managerial activities prevent leaders from engaging in other pursuits that prepare them for the principalship (Melton, Mallory, Mays, & Chance, 2011).

Discussion for Research Question Two. To what extent do assistant principals report self-efficacy in facilitating the school leadership domains of organizational school culture, instructional leadership, school improvement, management, and family and community relations?

The respondents reported that their highest level of capacity were in the domains of family and community relations and organizational school culture. Specifically, respondents indicated a high level of capacity to use clear ethical principles to guide decision-making and problem solving. Research indicates that a leaders' perceived integrity has an impact on the ethical intentions of his or her subordinates. Furthermore, Walumbwa, Mayer, Wang, Wang, Workman, & Christensen (2011) found that ethical leadership not only increases employee performance, but also personnel self-efficacy,

leader–subordinate relationship quality, and identification with the organization. Neubert, Carlson, Kacmar, Roberts, & Chonko (2009) also found that ethical leadership is a precursor to job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Kim & Brymer, 2011). Continued use of ethical leadership should in turn increased teacher retention and commitment to the mission and vision of the school. It should also increase the use of ethical practices by all personnel which has an impact of the educational attainment of historically marginalized groups (Avey, Palanski, & Walumbwa, 2011).

The ability to build and sustain positive relationships with families and caregivers and communicate effectively with families ranked within the five highest competencies for respondents. This finding should suggest that the respondents have knowledge of the needs of students, parents and caregivers. This should also suggest that there is a commitment to engage the community in the development of reforms rather than hoping that they will accept what has been developed for them (Simmons, 2010). Whereas engagement of families and caregivers has been linked to increased cognitive and emotional outcomes for students (Hill & Tyson, 2009; Jeynes, 2012; Louis, et al., 2010; Xu, Benson, Mudrey-Camino, & Steiner, 2010),expecting communities to accept what those in charge have designed for them, but not with them, leaves potentially successful programs vulnerable to opposition by the very communities they were designed for (Simmons, 2010). Building positive relationships with families also has the potential to allow the families' critical voices to be heard when developing policy and practice (Lachman, Lemons, Orr, & Byrne-Jiménez, 2009). Given the research on leadership self-efficacy, it is likely that regardless of their current levels of practice, assistant principals

will continue to set high goals in the area of building strong positive relationships with families and pursue achievement of the goals. Moving from high capacity to effective practice will likely take a need for school leaders to embrace an explicit customer orientation (Hallinger & Lu, 2013).

The respondents reported lower levels of self-efficacy in the domains of instructional leadership and school improvement. With these also being the domains where assistant principals engage in practice least frequently, it is likely that without intervention, there will be little if any improvement in these domains over time. The present study confirms previous research that there are fewer efficacies in the areas of management, instructional leadership and school improvement (Hausman et al., 2002).

A considerable number of respondents reported that they were undecided about, disagreed or strongly disagreed that they possessed self-efficacy in the capacity to align professional development based on identified student needs. With a substantial number of students served being minority and low-income, it is likely that lack of capacity has implications for a mental shift around the effectiveness of culturally responsive pedagogies. Neoliberal reforms that standardize teaching and learning for all students marginalize efforts to individualize learning for students (Sleeter, 2012). This marginalization may act as backlash pedagogy in being a counterassault against real or perceived shifts in power (Gutierrez, Asato, Santos, & Gotanda, 2002, p. 337). In order to shift teaching and learning to sustainably meet students' needs, assistant principals will likely have to delve into their own understanding of the implications of hegemony, while simultaneously helping teachers do the same.

Having high self-efficacy is important to school leadership as it is related to the way leaders think and act in schools (Petridou, Nicolaidou, & Williams, 2014). McCullers and Bozeman's (2010) found that leaders with higher self-efficacy had a stronger belief in their ability to achieve school and district goals. Bandura (2009) stressed that "when faced with obstacles, setbacks and failures, those who doubt their capabilities slacken their efforts, give up, or settle for mediocre solutions; those who have a strong belief in their capabilities redouble their efforts to master the challenge" (p. 120).

Discussion for Research Question Three. How do assistant principals' self-reports of efficacy correlate to the extent of practice of school leadership?

Assistant principals reports of capacity and practice in the domains of school leadership were positively related at moderate levels for all domains. Because self-efficacy levels are significantly higher than practice in most domains and competencies of leadership, there is likelihood that the self-efficacy will increase the level of practice in all domains.

Interestingly, there were more sets of strong correlations along groupings of capacity competencies and practice competencies than there were among paired capacity and practice competencies. Those who engage in the practice of encouraging staff members' initiative and innovative efforts were more likely to practice building a collaborative environment and engage in facilitating shared leadership. Encouraging initiative and innovation was also positively correlated with all the competencies of instructional leadership, three of the competencies of school improvement, two competencies of management and the competencies of community relationships.

Although not statistically significant, it is worth noting that encouraging initiative and innovation was negatively correlated with management of student discipline. These results suggest that the ability to encourage staff initiative and innovation is a characteristic that must be considered in aspiring principals. Furthermore, this characteristic should be cultivated during the process of developing assistant principals into instructional leaders.

As there are only weak correlations on 7 out of 33 possible school indicators, it would be questionable to attribute the capacity or practice of encouraging initiative and innovation to school setting. Therefore in using capacity and practice data to determine those who would be ready to assume the principalship, it is advisable to investigate a leader's evidence of prior practice over his or her self-reports of capacity or his or her school setting (Ajzen, 2011).

There were strong correlations between the instructional leadership paired capacity and practice competencies of changing content and instructional methods and supporting differentiated instruction. There were also significantly moderate and strong sets of correlations between the majority of capacity and practice competencies of instructional leadership. In addition, there were also significant positive correlations between the practice of instructional leadership and several competencies of organizational school culture and school improvement. Conversely, only a few week correlations with the competencies of management and family community relations occurred in the study. Additionally, school indicators were not strongly correlated to instructional leadership capacity or practice, implying that high levels of capacity and

practice in the domain of instructional leadership are not a factor of school setting. This means that respondents spending time on instructional leadership activities do not spend time engaging in management and building relationships with families and caregivers. This indicates that those assistant principals who have high levels of instructional leadership capacity and practice lack sufficient experience in the areas of school management or family community relations.

Discussion for Research Question Four. What differences exist among assistant principal capacity and practice based on experience, setting and personal characteristics?

Significant differences in the capacity and practice of the respondents were not found based on administrative experience, principal preparation program, educational attainment or prior administrative experience. These results confirm previous findings (Hausman et al., 2002; Matthews, 2003; and Robinson, 2007) that reported that experience does not result in more time spent on instructional leadership.

The research investigated whether there were significant differences in leadership capacity and practice based on school setting. It is interesting to note that the respondents serving in schools with the highest (76-100%) and lowest levels (10-25%) of minority students spent less time engaging in family community relations than did the group who had between 26% and 75% minority students. Furthermore, respondents serving in schools with the highest and lowest levels of low-socioeconomic students also spent the least amount of time engaging in family community relations. Since there is not a significant difference in capacity based on socio-economic and minority levels, it is feasible that principals in these schools maintain control in schools with lower

enrollments and the schools are not engaging families and the communities when there are higher enrollment levels. Regardless of the motivation, the phenomenon creates a comparative gap in experience for these groups, which has implication for their readiness to assume the principalship.

In investigating the differences in capacity and practice by type of assistant principal, there was not a consistent set of significant differences based on assistant principal job type. Although not statistically significant, it is worth noting that traditional assistant principals reported higher capacity and greater extent of practice in the majority of the competencies than the other three groups. The administrative assistant group almost always reported the second highest level of capacity and practice in the competencies. Since the administrative interns and principal residents are in a learning year, it could indicate that being in a state of learning causes them to doubt their self-efficacy at a greater level than those in a non-preparation phase of their career. It could also mean that principals retain more control of the practice aspects of the principalship when mentoring another administrator, regardless of level. These results reaffirm the importance of the purposeful role of the principal in preparing the assistant principal to assume the principalship (Berry, 20; 1Bottoms, O'Neill, Fry, & Hill, 2003).

Exploration of the assistant principal personal characteristics was meant to establish if it was determinate of capacity and practice. Gender was not found to be a factor in the capacity and practice of the domains of leadership. Minorities reported higher capacity in the domains of management and family community relationship, but it did not affect the domains of practice. Minorities did spend more time building and

sustaining an educational vision and managing facilities. At a surface level, race is not a factor in the practice of leadership, but it is a factor in specific competencies.

The data do not indicate that there was a significant difference based on principal preparation program. This finding is not surprising because respondents were not asked to reflect on the relationship between their preparation and their leadership capacity, but it does indicate that the discrepancies between perceived capacity and the role of the assistant principal is pervasive regardless of preparation. The respondents' reports of capacity indicate that they believe they are prepared. The division of roles and job expectations that focus the assistant principal on organizational school culture seems to remove the assistant principal from the strategic and decision making functions of school leadership.

The investigation of assistant principals' belief about the principalship garnered the greatest amount of differences in capacity and practice. Although most responses were in the agree or strongly agree categories, there were significant differences based the attitudes towards the office of the principalship. Those who strongly agreed that the principalship can make a difference in the lives of students and staff reported higher capacity and practice in most of the domains of school leadership. The same finding resulted based on the belief that the principalship provides opportunities for professional growth and the office enables a leader to influence school change.

The results of principal attitudes towards the principalship indicate that more than any other factor, personal convictions dictate behavior. This is consistent with previous assertions that argue that since espoused values and values in actions are not always congruent (Argyris & Schön, 1974; Devereaux, 2003), personal beliefs are a strong predictor of behavior (Bandura, 1986; Nespor, 198; Rokeach, 1972).

Limitations

This study was designed to minimize the possibility for erroneous conclusions. However, as with any type of descriptive research, certain limitations were present in this study. First, this study was conducted using a purposive convenience sample of assistant principals in one urban district. It was impossible to ensure that all assistant principals were represented in the sample. The results may not be applicable to assistant principals serving in varying urban contexts. It may also be difficult to apply the results to assistant principals serving in small districts. The three districts included in the sample population all rank within the 1.8% of districts within the United States that serve between 25000 and 999999 students (Sable, Plotts, & Mitchell, 2010).

A second limitation of the study was the time of year of the survey. The survey was administered during the time when schools were piloting the new state online assessments and thus created added stress during this time of year, which was not there in previous years. This is also the time of the year when schools were being asked to complete other surveys, and thus respondents may have been experiencing survey fatigue. Perhaps this was a contributing factor to the reason that 26.7% of the respondents

began the survey but were not able to complete it before the administration window closed.

A third limitation was the collection of the data. The data were collected using a confidential electronic survey where participation was voluntary and responses were self-reported. Some respondents may have been concerned about the confidentiality of the information and therefore may have chosen to refrain from participation.

Finally, a fourth limitation of the study is related to the survey instrument. The Initiative for Systemic Program Improvement through Research in Educational Leadership (INSPIRE Leadership) – Leader in Practice Survey instrument was developed for the purpose of facilitating program assessment, accreditation and program improvement to provide a source of evidence on program outcomes. This is the first time that this survey was used to inquire about leadership practices of assistant principals. The items on the survey were broadly constructed and included several double-barreled questions possibly resulting in inaccuracy of measurement. The whole instrument was found to be very reliable ($\alpha = .94$). The reliability coefficients for all of the capacity domains were in the acceptable range ($\alpha = .79$ and above). The management practice domain was not found to be highly reliable ($\alpha = .59$). The other four subscales for practice were found to be highly reliable ($\alpha = .80$ and above).

Implications for Policy and Practice

There are numerous implications for policy and practice based on the findings of the current research. School districts looking to leverage the role of the assistant principal to increase the leadership function throughout the organization will want to consider the

results of this study as it reveals missed opportunities of leadership capacity and practice of assistant principals.

There were several strengths in the capacity and practice of assistant principals including the domains of facilitating organizational school culture, building strong and sustainable family and community relations. Assistant principals spend the majority of their time engaging in managing student discipline, setting high expectations for students and building positive relationships with families and caregivers. Districts need to use the strengths of assistant principals in order to improve the level of practice in other areas. Zenger, Folkman and Edinger (2011) argue that good leaders become exceptional by developing their strengths. This research found that assistant principals with a higher level of instructional leadership in one competency also had higher levels of capacity and practice in other competencies of instructional leadership. School principals and district leaders need to elicit the knowledge gained from assistant principals through their engagement in the management of student discipline to inform policy around best practices of discipline and how to engage families in the educational program of the school as equal partners with educators.

School principals and district leaders need to examine the current practices of assistant principals in the domains of instructional leadership and school improvement. Assistant principals reported the lowest levels of capacity and practice in these domains. Since the principal assigns the duties of assistant principals, a measure of principals' efficacy has to include the ability to mentor other leaders in the building. Working from an individualized growth plan will allow districts to hold both the assistant principal and

principal accountable for growth in the assistant principals' capacity for leadership. Assistant principals also need to be held accountable for the growth of other leaders in the building. In placing this accountability, it will help to ingrain the idea that a key component of effective distributed leadership is the development of the leadership function throughout the organization.

As a key element of succession management, school systems need to invest more in discovering dispositions and attitudes toward the principalship during the interview process. The results of this study indicate that the most significant factor that influences leadership capacity and practice are the dispositions towards the principalship. Early in the identification of leaders for the high potential group, it is advisable to discover the belief structures that will indicate higher levels of capacity and practice for the domains of school leadership. As part of the tapping process, leaders have to discover views about the nature of the principalship in order to support the aspiring principals with the best chances of impacting student outcomes. Schmidt and Hunter (1998) found that years of experience and educational attainment were not very reliable in predicting future success in a job. The current research corroborates these findings given that significant differences were not found based on experience or education. Continuing to use traditional methods of tapping leaders will only serve to reinforce disparities in leadership competencies and diversity (DeAngelis & O'Connor, 2012; Myung, Loeb, & Horng, 2011; Pounder & Crow, 2005).

Assistant principal practitioners need to stay informed of leadership competencies that result in student achievement and advocate that they have the opportunity to build

their capacity and engage in practice around those practices. While building on strengths in capacity and practice, assistant principals need to engage in a critical theory approach to change. In speaking truth to power about the role of the assistant principal in achieving student outcomes and preparing for the principalship, the educator will have to target collective representations of outmoded models of distributed leadership that have existed in schools since the inception of the role of assistant principals (O'Toole, n.d.).

Recommendations Future Research

There are numerous areas that could be addressed through additional research. Going deeper into inquiry around the capacity and practice of assistant principals will allow researchers to make more robust recommendations about the assistant principalship. First it would be important for this study to be replicated with assistant principals in urban districts in other regions of the country and with suburban and rural assistant principals. This larger sample of assistant principals will be more representative of the population of assistant principals and thus reduce the influence of outliers and extreme observations (Patel, Doku, & Tennakoon, 2003). It will also offer greater analysis based on the ability to conduct more in depth analysis of the data. This study could be also replicated with principals to determine the difference between principals' capacity and practice and that of assistant principal capacity and practice.

Because attitudes towards the principalship was the factor that indicated the greatest difference in the level of capacity and practice, further research needs to be conducted along this line of inquiry. These studies could include research about the impact of beliefs

about the principalship on the capacity and practice of assistant principals, the relationship between leadership beliefs and preparation or career path.

If the crucial role of the assistant principal is to increase equitable outcomes for all students, then it is important to inquire about the leadership behaviors that lead to increased student outcomes. Studies that include the perspectives of teachers, parents and students as well as student achievement might provide a broader context for understanding the impact of the structure and functions of school leadership. Understanding more about how school leadership is actualized through the various roles and responsibilities of principals and assistant principals would help the field of educational leadership increase leadership capacity and sustainability and escalate efforts to improve outcomes for all students.

Conclusion

Based on empirical findings, this study has affirmed the need to further research and refine the role of the assistant principal. The results indicate that in addition to strengths, there are explicit gaps in the leadership practices of assistant principals that need to be addressed. The capacity and practice in the domains of instructional leadership and school improvement are spheres where the significant numbers of assistant principals fail to engage. On the contrary, higher levels of instructional leadership practice are not correlated with school management or building family and community relationships. This would indicate that there continues to be a proliferation of duties and a lack of consistent set of practices (Kwan & Walker, 2011).

Those involved in the socialization of assistant principals should consider how to make the role more intentional in both a high level use of the role and preparation for the principalship (Bottoms et al, 2003; Lovely, 2004). Since the principal is still the main determinant of the responsibilities of the assistant principal, it will be incumbent upon the principal to mentor assistant principals in such a way that the assistant principal will have proficient capacity in all areas of school leadership (Marshall & Hooley, 2006; Mertz, 2006; Melton, Mallory, Mays, & Chance, 2011). This means leveraging strengths of the role and providing more opportunities for balanced leadership opportunities and leadership mentoring.

Since the majority of principals first serve time as an assistant principal, the preparation of assistant principals to assume the principalship will have significant consequences (Kwan, 2009). The literature has long held and continues to challenge the notion that the role of assistant principal is adequate preparation for the principalship (Chan, Webb, & Bowen, 2003; Harris, Muijs, & Crawford, 2003; Kwan, 2009; Mertz, 2000; Webb & Vulliamy, 1995). Research will continue to inform policy and practice around the leadership practices that will impact student achievement. Policy makers will need to engage in a culture shift around the meaning of the assistant principal role and the specific distribution of leadership. Assistant principal practitioners will have to vigorously advocate for their personal engagement in the practices that will help them to continue to grow as extremely competent leaders.

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Appendix A

INSPIRE Leader in Practice Survey Consent Form

We invite you to complete the Initiative for Systemic Program Improvement through Research in Educational Leadership (INSPIRE Leadership) – Leader in Practice Survey, which is offered by the University Council of Educational Administration. This survey includes questions related to your current leadership practices as an assistant principal and is designed to document leadership practices and school improvement and organizational indicators. In addition, this study is being conducted in partial fulfillment of requirements for doctoral dissertation research. Lee Morgan is conducting the study. Results will be used to determine the leadership competencies of assistant principals. Lee Morgan can be reached at 303-910-7263 or lee.morgan@du.edu. This project is supervised by the dissertation advisor and program chair, Dr. Kent Seidel, Morgridge College of Education, University of Denver, Denver, CO 80208, 303-871-2496 / kent.seidel@du.edu.

Participation in this study should take about 15-20 minutes of your time. The risks associated with this project are minimal. If, however, you experience discomfort you may discontinue the survey at any time. We respect your right to choose not to answer any questions that may make you feel uncomfortable. Refusal to participate or withdrawal from participation will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

The results from this survey will contribute broadly to knowledge development regarding assistant principal leadership practice. We appreciate your time in completing the survey and providing information that can be used for improving leadership practice, and policies related to the leadership development and practice. Your contribution is critical.

Your responses will be identified by code number only and will be kept separate from information that could identify you. This is done to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of your responses. Only the researcher will have access to your individual data and any reports generated as a result of this study will use only group averages and paraphrased wording. However, should any information contained in this study be the subject of a court order or lawful subpoena, the University of Denver might not be able to avoid compliance with the order or subpoena. Although no questions in this interview address it, we are required by law to tell you that if information is revealed concerning

suicide, homicide, or child abuse and neglect, it is required by law that this be reported to the proper authorities.

You may keep these consent form pages for your records. Please sign the bottom of this page if you understand and agree to the above. If you do not understand any part of the above statement, please ask the researcher any questions you have. I have read and understood the foregoing descriptions of the study called Understanding the Leadership Capacity of Assistant Principals. I have asked for and received a satisfactory explanation of any language that I did not fully understand. I agree to participate in this study, and I understand that I may withdraw my consent at any time. I have received a copy of this consent form.

Decline: If you choose not to participate in the INSPIRE - Leader in Practice Survey, please mark so below.

☐I choose to participate

☐I choose not to participate

What is your gender?

☐Male ☐Female

How do you identify yourself in terms of race/ethnicity?

☐White	☐Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
☐Black or African American	☐American Indian or Alaska Native
☐Hispanic or Latino/a	☐Bi-racial/Multi-racial
☐Asian	☐Other

What is your year of birth? (yyyy) ☐

What year did you complete your school leadership preparation program? ☐

What was the name of your leadership preparation program (the program you completed leading to a credential)? ☐

Professional Experience

How many years of experience do you have in the following positions?

K-12 Teacher (years) ☐

K-12 Teacher Leader (e.g., teacher leader, department chair, instructional coach) ☐

K-12 Administrator (e.g., principal, assistant principal, central office administrator) ☐

Other K-12 Professional Educator (e.g., school counselor, psychologist, librarian, district level employee) ☐

Job in another type of educational agency

In total, how many years of professional educational experience do you have altogether?

How many years of experience do you have in jobs outside of education?

How many years have you worked at your current school?

Your School

Please answer the following questions about the school in which you currently serve as assistant principal.

What best describes the location of your school? (check one)

☐Urban ☐Small Town

☐Small City ☐Rural

☐Suburban

What grades does your school include? (check all that apply)

☐Pre-K	☐3	☐7	☐11
☐Kindergarten	☐4	☐8	☐12
☐1	☐5	☐9	☐Other
☐2	☐6	☐10	

How many students are in your school?

What percentage of your students are classified as racial/ethnic "minority" students?

☐0-25% ☐26-50% ☐51-75% ☐76-100%

What percentage of your students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch?

☐0-25% ☐26-50% ☐51-75% ☐76-100%

What percentage of your students are English language learners (ELL)?

☐0-25% ☐26-50% ☐51-75% ☐76-100%

What percentage of your students meet or exceed proficiency on state Reading/Language Arts assessments?

☐0-25% ☐26-50% ☐51-75% ☐76-100%

What percentage of your students meet or exceed proficiency on state Mathematics assessments?

☐0-25% ☐26-50% ☐51-75% ☐76-100%

Which of the following best describes your School Performance Framework status last year?

☐ BLUE: Accredited with Distinction

☐ GREEN: Accredited

☐ YELLOW: Accredited with Improvement Plan

☐ ORANGE: Accredited with Priority Improvement Plan

☐ RED: Accredited with Turnaround Plan

How many teachers are in your school? ☐

How many teachers have less than three years total teaching experience? ☐

Principal Beliefs

I believe being a principal:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
Can make a difference in the lives of students and staff	O	O	O	O	O
Provides opportunities for my professional growth	O	O	O	O	O
Enables me to influence school change	O	O	O	O	O
Has too many responsibilities	O	O	O	O	O
Decreases my opportunity to work directly with children	O	O	O	O	O
Creates too much stress	O	O	O	O	O

School Leadership Practices:

Organizational School Culture

	Please rate your agreement with how well you do the following					In the last month, approximately how often did you engage in the following activities in your role at this school?			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Never	Twice a Month	Twice a week	Daily
Promote effectiveness in serving all students well	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Build a collaborative environment	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Foster staff sensitivity to student diversity	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Work with staff to solve school or department problems	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Build and sustain an educational vision for a school	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Use clear ethical principles to guide decision making and problem solving	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Encourage staff members' initiative and innovative efforts	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Engage staff in comprehensive planning for school improvement	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Facilitate shared leadership.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

Instructional Leadership

	Please rate your agreement with how well you do the following					In the last month, approximately how often did you engage in the following activities in your role at this school?			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Never	Twice a Month	Twice a week	Daily
Work with teachers to change content and instructional methods if students are not doing well	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Provide constructive feedback for teachers to improve instruction	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Support differentiated instruction to enhance student learning	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Support professional development activities for teachers	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Align professional development activities for teachers based on identified instructional needs	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

School Improvement

	Please rate your agreement with how well you do the following					In the last month, approximately how often did you engage in the following activities in your role at this school?			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Never	Twice a Month	Twice a week	Daily
Create a coherent educational program across the school	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Promotes a curriculum that supports college and career readiness	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Evaluate curriculum for its use and effectiveness	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Redesign the school's organization to enhance teaching and learning	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Establish high expectations for student learning	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Use school or district data to measure school progress	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

Management

	Please rate your agreement with how well you do the following					In the last month, approximately how often did you engage in the following activities in your role at this school?			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Never	Twice a Month	Twice a week	Daily
Manage school resources effectively and efficiently (e.g. personnel, instructional time, supplies/equipment)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Manage discipline effectively	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Manage facilities and their maintenance to promote a safe and orderly learning environment	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Recruit, hire, and retain high quality personnel	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

Family & Community Relations

	Please rate your agreement with how well you do the following					In the last month, approximately how often did you engage in the following activities in your role at this school?			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Never	Twice a Month	Twice a week	Daily
Build and sustain positive relationships with families and caregivers	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Communicate effectively with families and caregivers	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Build and sustain positive relationships with community partners	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Communicate effectively with community partners	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

School Improvement

To what extent do you agree that the following conditions are present at your school?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
The school has well-developed process for facilitating ongoing school-wide improvement & long-range planning.	O	O	O	O	O
There is a clear sense of purpose among staff members about what we want our students to accomplish.	O	O	O	O	O
Teachers collect and use student performance data to improve teaching and learning.	O	O	O	O	O
Teachers strongly support the changes we have undertaken at this school.	O	O	O	O	O
Teachers focus on improving and expanding their instructional strategies.	O	O	O	O	O
Curriculum, instruction, and learning materials are well coordinated across the different grade levels at this school.	O	O	O	O	O

Student Engagement

To what extent do you agree that the following conditions are present at your school?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
Students spend sufficient effort (in & out of class) to learn what we teach.	O	O	O	O	O
Students are academically engaged in their course work.	O	O	O	O	O
Students work hard in this school.	O	O	O	O	O
There are positive racial, ethnic, and cultural relations among students.	O	O	O	O	O

Family Engagement

To what extent do you agree that the following conditions are present at your school?**?**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
Families take an active role in their child's education.	O	O	O	O	O
Families provide help &/or encouragement with child's schoolwork at home.	O	O	O	O	O
Families emphasize the importance of educational success with their child.	O	O	O	O	O
The school communicates regularly with families in multiple ways.	O	O	O	O	O

Teacher Collaboration

To what extent do you agree that the following conditions are present at your school?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
Teachers work together to develop teaching materials or activities for particular classes.	O	O	O	O	O
Teachers discuss how to help students having problems.	O	O	O	O	O
Teachers meet formally to discuss common challenges in the classroom.	O	O	O	O	O
Teachers share and discuss student work with other teachers.	O	O	O	O	O
Teachers observe each other's classrooms (e.g. participate in learning walks).	O	O	O	O	O

Shared Problem-Solving

To what extent do you agree that the following conditions are present at your school?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
Staff take calculated risks to improve their work.	O	O	O	O	O
Staff take action to solve problems; they don't just talk about them.	O	O	O	O	O
Staff give open and honest feedback to each other.	O	O	O	O	O

Collective Professional Efficacy

To what extent do you agree that the following conditions are present at your school?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am able to influence school change.	O	O	O	O	O
Teachers in the school are able to get through to the most difficult students.	O	O	O	O	O
Teachers here are confident they will be able to motivate their students.	O	O	O	O	O
Teachers here have the skills needed to produce meaningful student learning.	O	O	O	O	O
Teachers in this school believe that every child can learn.	O	O	O	O	O
Teachers in this school have the skills to deal with student disciplinary problems.	O	O	O	O	O

District Support

To what extent do you agree that the following conditions are present at your school?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
The district supports our school's efforts to improve.	O	O	O	O	O
The district promotes the professional development of school educators.	O	O	O	O	O
The district encourages school leaders to take risks in order to make change.	O	O	O	O	O
The district helps the school leaders to promote and nurture a focus on teaching and learning.	O	O	O	O	O

As an assistant principal I believe that I would be more successful if.....

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. If you are happy with your responses, click "Submit" below.

Appendix B

INSPIRE Correlation to Transformational Leadership Behaviors

	Question	TLB Correlate
	Organizational School Culture	
1	Promote effectiveness in serving all students well	1.3
2	Build a collaborative environment	3.2
3	Foster staff sensitivity to student diversity	2.2
4	Work with staff to solve school or department problems	3.2
5	Build and sustain an educational vision for a school	1.1
6	Use clear ethical principles to guide decision making and problem solving	1.2
7	Encourage staff members' initiative and innovative efforts	2.1
8	Engage staff in comprehensive planning for school improvement	1.2
9	Facilitate shared leadership.	3.2
	Instructional Leadership	
10	Work with teachers to change content and instructional methods if students are not doing well	1.2
11	Provide constructive feedback for teachers to improve instruction	1.3
12	Support differentiated instruction to enhance student learning	4.3.2
13	Support professional development activities for teachers	4.3.2
14	Align professional development activities for teachers based on identified instructional needs	1.2
	School Improvement	
16	Create a coherent educational program across the school	4.3.2
16	Promotes a curriculum that supports college and career readiness	1.2
17	Evaluate curriculum for its use and effectiveness	4.3.2
18	Redesign the school’s organization to enhance teaching and learning	4.3.2
19	Establish high expectations for student learning	1.3
20	Use school or district data to measure school progress	4.2

	Management	
21	Manage school resources effectively and efficiently (e.g. personnel, instructional time, supplies/equipment)	4.3.1
22	Manage discipline effectively	4.3.2
23	Manage facilities and their maintenance to promote a safe and orderly learning environment	4.2
24	Recruit, hire, and retain high quality personnel	4.3.1

	Family & Community Relations	
25	Build and sustain positive relationships with families and caregivers	3.3
26	Communicate effectively with families and caregivers	3.3
27	Build and sustain positive relationships with community partners	3.3
28	Communicate effectively with community partners	3.3

Transformational Leadership Constructs

1. Setting Directions
    - 1.1 Vision (charisma inspirational motivation)
    - 1.2 Group goals
    - 1.3 High-performance expectations
2. Helping People
    - 2.1 Individualized consideration/support
    - 2.2 Intellectual stimulation
    - 2.3 Modeling key values and practices
3. Redesigning the Organization
    - 3.1 Helping to build collaborative cultures
    - 3.2 Creating structures to foster collaboration
    - 3.3 Building productive relations with parents and the community
4. Transactional and Managerial Aggregate
    - 4.1 Contingent reward
    - 4.2Management by exception: active, passive
    - 4.3 Management
        - 4.3.1 staffing
        - 4.3.2 instructional support
        - 4.3.3 monitoring school activity
        - 4.3.4 buffering

Appendix C

Means, Standard Deviation (*SD*) And Scale Reliabilities Of Survey Responses

Principal Beliefs

	Mean	*SD*
Principal Beliefs		
1. I believe being a principal Can make a difference in the lives of students and staff	4.84	.49
2. I believe being a principal Provides opportunities for my professional growth	4.61	.65
3. I believe being a principal Enables me to influence school change	4.76	.57
4. I believe being a principal Has too many responsibilities	3.80	1.13
5. I believe being a principal Decreases my opportunity to work directly with children	3.03	1.23
6. I believe being a principal Creates too much stress	3.21	1.18
Cronbach's alpha Principal Beliefs 1-3 =0.831; Cronbach's alpha Principal Beliefs 4-6 =0.745		

Organizational School Culture Capacity & Practice

Means, standard deviation (*SD*) and scale reliabilities of survey responses

	Capacity		Practice	
	Mean	*SD*	Mean	*SD*
School Leadership Capacity & Practice	**4.12**	**0.45**	**2.92**	**0.46**
Organizational School Culture	**4.20**	**0.43**	**3.21**	**0.51**
1. Promote effectiveness in serving all students well	4.13	0.61	3.57	0.68
2. Build a collaborative environment	4.25	0.67	3.45	0.68
3. Foster staff sensitivity to student diversity	4.20	0.65	2.95	0.93
4. Work with staff to solve school or department problems	4.25	0.63	3.25	0.85
5. Build and sustain an educational vision for a school	4.12	0.77	2.90	1.04
6. Use clear ethical principles to guide decision making and problem solving	4.46	0.58	3.73	0.58
7. Encourage staff members' initiative and innovative efforts	4.17	0.72	3.20	0.80
8. Engage staff in comprehensive planning for school improvement	4.05	0.75	2.65	0.85
9. Facilitate shared leadership.	4.12	0.71	3.16	0.91
Cronbach's alpha Organizational School Culture Capacity = .820				
Cronbach's alpha Organizational School Culture Practice = .803				

Instructional Leadership Capacity & Practice

Means, standard deviation (*SD*) and scale reliabilities of survey responses

	Capacity		Practice	
	Mean	*SD*	Mean	*SD*
Instructional Leadership	**4.09**	**0.62**	**2.61**	**0.64**
10. Work with teachers to change content and instructional methods if students are not doing well	4.09	0.69	2.73	0.78
11. Provide constructive feedback for teachers to improve instruction	4.22	0.72	2.88	0.79
12. Support differentiated instruction to enhance student learning	4.1	0.76	2.74	0.86
13. Support professional development activities for teachers	4.08	0.74	2.46	0.75
14. Align professional development activities for teachers based on identified instructional needs	3.96	0.84	2.25	0.82
Cronbach's alpha Instructional Leadership Capacity = 0.881				
Cronbach's alpha Instructional Leadership Practice = 0.850				

School Improvement Capacity & Practice

Means, standard deviation (*SD*) and scale reliabilities of survey responses

	Capacity		Practice	
	Mean	*SD*	Mean	*SD*
School Improvement	**3.96**	**0.57**	**2.72**	**0.69**
15. Create a coherent educational program across the school	3.79	0.93	2.63	1.09
16. Promotes a curriculum that supports college and career readiness	3.91	0.93	2.69	1.09
17. Evaluate curriculum for its use and effectiveness	3.54	0.94	2.20	0.95
18. Redesign the school's organization to enhance teaching and learning	3.71	0.80	2.24	0.97
19. Establish high expectations for student learning	4.52	0.54	3.56	0.79
20. Use school or district data to measure school progress	4.31	0.62	2.94	0.87
Cronbach's alpha School Improvement Capacity = 0.793				
Cronbach's alpha School Improvement Practice = 0.814				

Management Capacity & Practice

Means, standard deviation (*SD*) and scale reliabilities of survey responses

	Capacity		Practice	
	Mean	*SD*	Mean	*SD*
Management	**4.12**	**0.64**	**3.05**	**0.64**
21. Manage school resources effectively and efficiently	4.06	0.74	3.1	0.94
22. Manage discipline effectively	4.14	0.85	3.66	0.68
23. Manage facilities and their maintenance to promote a safe and orderly learning environment	4.01	0.87	2.89	1.15
24. Recruit, hire, and retain high quality personnel	4.26	0.72	2.53	0.94
Cronbach's alpha Management Capacity = 0.802				
Cronbach's alpha Management Practice = 0.591				

Family & Community Relations Capacity & Practice

Means, standard deviation (*SD*) and scale reliabilities of survey responses

	Capacity		Practice	
	Mean	*SD*	Mean	*SD*
Family & Community Relations	**4.25**	**0.67**	**2.99**	**0.70**
25. Build and sustain positive relationships with families and caregivers	4.45	0.66	3.44	0.79
26. Communicate effectively with families and caregivers	4.36	0.67	3.37	0.78
27. Build and sustain positive relationships with community partners	4.14	0.85	2.64	0.94
28. Communicate effectively with community partners	4.05	0.92	2.56	0.91
Cronbach's alpha Family Community Relations Capacity = 0.87				
Cronbach's alpha Family Community Relations Practice = 0.825				

School Indicators

Means, standard deviation (*SD*) and scale reliabilities of survey responses

	Mean	*SD*
School Indicators	**3.77**	**0.53**
School Improvement	**3.69**	**0.78**
29. The school has well-developed process for facilitating ongoing school-wide improvement & long-range planning.	3.61	1.03
30. There is a clear sense of purpose among staff members about what we want our students to accomplish.	3.87	1.04
31. Teachers collect and use student performance data to improve teaching and learning.	3.91	0.93
32. Teachers strongly support the changes we have undertaken at this school.	3.45	1.15
33. Teachers focus on improving and expanding their instructional strategies.	3.89	0.82
34. Curriculum, instruction, and learning materials are well coordinated across the different grade levels at this school.	3.39	1.03
Cronbach's alpha School Improvement Indicator = 0.865		

Means, standard deviation (*SD*) and scale reliabilities of survey responses

	Mean	*SD*
Student Engagement	**3.72**	**0.70**
35. Students spend sufficient effort (in & out of class) to learn what we teach.	3.42	1.04
36. Students are academically engaged in their course work.	3.55	0.90
37. Students work hard in this school.	3.72	0.93
38. There are positive racial, ethnic, and cultural relations among students.	3.98	0.73
Cronbach's alpha Student Engagement Indicator = 0.843		
Family Engagement	**3.55**	**0.77**
39. Families take an active role in their child's education.	3.44	0.99
40. Families provide help &/or encouragement with child's schoolwork at home.	3.28	0.98
41. Families emphasize the importance of educational success with their child.	3.59	0.90
42. The school communicates regularly with families in multiple ways.	3.90	0.93
Cronbach's alpha Family Engagement Indicator = 0.818		
Teacher Collaboration	**3.87**	**0.59**
43. Teachers work together to develop teaching materials or activities for particular classes.	4.08	0.71
44. Teachers discuss how to help students having problems.	4.09	0.66
45. Teachers meet formally to discuss common challenges in the classroom.	4.02	0.82
46. Teachers share and discuss student work with other teachers.	4.01	0.68
47. Teachers observe each other's classrooms (e.g. participate in learning walks).	3.17	1.04
Cronbach's alpha Teacher Collaboration Indicator = 0.803		
Shared Problem-Solving	**3.44**	**0.76**
48. Staff takes calculated risks to improve their work.	3.49	0.87
49. Staff takes action to solve problems; they don't just talk about them.	3.56	0.92
50. Staff gives open and honest feedback to each other.	3.28	1.01
Cronbach's alpha Shared Problem Solving Indicator = 0.750		

Collective Professional Efficacy	**3.56**	**0.67**
51. I am able to influence school change.	4.09	0.75
52. Teachers in the school are able to get through to the most difficult students.	3.24	0.94
53. Teachers here are confident they will be able to motivate their students.	3.50	0.90
54. Teachers here have the skills needed to produce meaningful student learning.	3.80	0.83
55. Teachers in this school believe that every child can learn.	3.67	1.00
56. Teachers in this school have the skills to deal with student disciplinary problems.	3.12	1.04
Cronbach's alpha Collective Professional Efficacy Indicator = 0.829		

District Support	**3.80**	**0.73**
57. The district supports our school's efforts to improve.	3.91	0.79
58. The district promotes the professional development of school educators.	3.92	0.81
59. The district encourages school leaders to take risks in order to make change.	3.57	1.02
60. The district helps the school leaders to promote and nurture a focus on teaching and learning.	3.82	0.90
Cronbach's alpha District Support Indicator = 0.837		